

T H E
T R A N S C E N D E N C E
O F
J E S U S C H R I S T

A Study of the Unique Features of His Person and Work

With special reference to the Fourth Gospel

By

Frederick Cawley, B.A. (Hons. Phil.), B.D., London.

Thesis

for

Ph.D., Edinburgh



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INTRODUCTORY

The purpose of this thesis embodies a venture of faith, an attempt to make clear the conviction that the Church has the utmost validity in holding to the final supremacy of Jesus Christ. It has been forwarded by noticing that one is unable to understand Jesus until in some way or other an entrance is made within the world of Jesus. His world is a strange one to the average man, and only less so to the Christian, since it seems never dissociated from that of God.

Modern theology is becoming more and more alive to the wonder of Jesus' personality. There has been a definite revolt against the purely academic way of regarding Him. It has been aided by new emphasis on an old distinction, viz. that there is a world of difference between knowledge 'about' and 'acquaintance with' a person or thing. The former is only of real worth when it is instrumental to a clearer knowledge, leading on to a deeper acquaintance with it. It is not difficult to see that in the last resort epistemology is based upon this vital distinction. Our entire knowledge 'about' the historic Jesus is only of real value as it leads us to spiritual 'acquaintance with' the living Christ.

A fresh impetus to Christological thought has been given to us in the pertinent suggestion that the mathematical term 'dimensions' can be fruitfully applied to thought concerning Him. It has been seen that such a term and its connotations need not necessarily be limited to purely mathematical matters.

Three characteristics are said to inhere within dimensional thinking, viz. 'Split', 'Paradox', and 'Polarity'. A 'split' is a cross section or aspect of reality which, as an entity in itself, is disclosed as standing within deeper dimensions. Thus each man's world, as a cross-section of the whole, is seen to exist within the world proper. An artist's landscape has been aptly used as an illustration of such a distinction. In itself it has only length and breadth, not depth, i.e. it is two-dimensional only. The third dimension, depth, is only conveyed by means of illusion, due to the talent of the artist. It is a 'split', an aspect of the whole. It is visioned as standing in a three-dimensional universe. The reason is that everything in the world necessarily stands within dimensions deeper than itself, and whenever we see or think about any phase of reality, a new dimension of deeper significance is emerging. Every continuum, whatever it may be, stands within a continuum plus one. It is just that deeper dimension that keeps a split from being isolated, and links it up with the whole.

'Paradox' is occasioned mentally when we see old familiar things or ideas standing within dimensions deeper than those hitherto known. It is an awareness of a plus previously unrecognised, now demanding that we understand it in this new light, and come to terms with its enlarged significance. Paradox has been illustrated by thinking of the mental revolution that would take place in the mind of a 'flatlander',

a man with a naïve belief in a two-dimensional world with only length and breadth, should a friend introduce him suddenly into our normal three-dimensional world. His whole scheme of things would be immediately broken up, and he would be driven to the task of re-building mentally his chaotic world on a deeper basis.

The world of science similarly awoke to a sense of paradox when Einstein broke in upon it with his plus of 'relativity'. Immediately the paradox of such a situation has stung science broad awake; it had to come to terms with this new factor, and to re-state the facts of the world in the light of this newer dimension. It is hardly an over-statement to say that the whole scientific world, in almost every aspect of it, has had to consider how a new orderly system of thought could satisfactorily be built on this new basis. The process is far from being complete.

'Polarity' is not so unfamiliar to us. For example, one side of this paper suggests the other; they are divisible in thought but not in actuality; they are necessarily polar to each other. Similarly the North Pole implies the South. The term father is linked on with the conception of a child. The deepest issue^{of} polarity is when, excluding matter, we deal with personality, connoting as it does thought and feeling and will. The usual polar relations do not seem adequate when we think about Jesus. Jesus is polar to whom? He still compels the

the world to think about Him. Faith has given to Him the predicate of divinity, and less than this never seems to be adequate. God alone seems polar to Jesus.

Modern psychology also has served the cause of theology, as it has gone on with its work of thinking out how the mind functions. In two ways especially has this science been of service. First, in remedying the serious mistake which idealistic philosophy foisted upon the world of thought by stating that we become aware of personal selfhood by means of the objective world. Modern psychology corrects this by showing that it is in the realm of the personal that we become aware of individual selfhood. The ego becomes self-conscious through the impact of other egos upon it, e.g. of mother, and nurse, and later on of others.

The other way in which psychology has aided theology has been by making it clear that man is a percipient creature, all the while engaged in building naturally and naïvely his own world about himself. In this sense, every man's world is his own unique creation. Consequently, there are as many worlds, so to speak, as there are percipient centres of consciousness. That means, in this new dimensional way of thinking, that each man abstracts this and that aspect or cross-section of the whole existent world. He wins through to a measure of reality, though not to the whole of it, at times, only a very biased phase of it. But it is his world.

As a cross-section, he may have every right to assume that it is real, and to seek the fullest possible endorsement of its reality; what he has no right to assert, is that it sums up the whole of reality. This is the valuable element in the modern doctrine of relativity.

In this correction of the idealistic mistake, and the emphasis on individual percipience, we have a measure of return to the singular work of Fichte whose central thought was of the Ego as the vital centre of everything. It is true that he over-emphasised this point, but for all that he was prophetic and ahead of his generation. He may yet come into his kingdom.

We are now in a position to touch upon the three polar groups of relations with which the new dimensional thought is concerned, viz. the I-It group, the I-You, and the I-Thou.

The lowest group is the first, the I-It, i.e. the self conscious of standing over against the world which it must subdue to its own needs and aspirations. Naturally, the greater term of this relationship is the I, since it has the plus of consciousness, and is capable of utilising the world for the purpose of building up its own personality.

The second group of polar relations is that of the I-You, i.e. the world of persons in which, as we saw above, the self becomes increasingly aware of its individuality. This group is deeper than the former, since it is wholly within the

realm of personality with all its deeper implications. It is the world of social relationship. At first, it may be only as a speck in the eye, but at last it is of profound importance to learn that it is a 'You' investigating the 'Me'. In this more important realm, the physical world of shallower dimensions is taken up and understood. We must not move from this position, since personality is always the deeper dimension, no matter by what big term the other world may be designated, e.g. biology, astronomy. The fact holds good, especially in the realm of Jesus, that the whole world as an 'It' is a more superficial fact than the personal.

The third group is the I-Thou. Here we go vastly deeper than with either of the two others: it is the realm of God. It is the final dimensional realm, within which all other realms must be seen as standing. If there be evidences of teleology in the world, it is here grounded in thought. We can go no further, dig no deeper, reach no higher. If God be at all, then He is the Alpha and Omega of the whole series, holding all together, but Himself held within none. It is not at all easy to conceive, since it is beyond any finite explication, and demands the intuition, yet does it seem to be a necessary postulate of all thought. We know as much of Him as He is willing to disclose; as much, perhaps, as we are able to bear.

This last realm is the world in which, unlike all others, Jesus is most completely at home. Far beyond the intuition of

Malebranche, Jesus saw everything within God, time and eternity alike. He saw that every phase of reality stands related to God, and only truly explicated with reference to Him. All else, then, even the totality of the world, is but as a 'split', realising its being in the all-inclusive dimensions of the Divine nature and will. Jesus has therefore ante-dated all thought about reality - it is God's world, to which alone He is the key, through whom it receives meaning and purpose.

It is here, within the realm of the I-Thou group of polar relations, in this final dimension of the soul's vision, that the pessimism engendered by modern thought can finally be thought through and overcome. Modern pessimism seems to be inevitable when we recall the dictum of modern psychology, viz. that man is a percipient creature engaged in building his 'split' of a world. Einstein's contribution of 'relativity' is of collateral importance. Where then can one stress finality? The good man builds his ethicised world, the bad man his evil world; both alike are abstracting, it appears, from a whole beyond their grasp. Both are 'splits', and one may be as good to the person concerned as the other. The result has been seen by many of the great standards of yesterday being flung away as not binding on one, save at his caprice. In many quarters, there is no real assurance of final worth and validity.

It is a paralysing pessimism, as every deep-seated pessimism is bound to be, for we live by faith in the Divine,

whether we explicitly recognise this fundamental principle or not. Modern thought, then, has brought us back to a position formerly deemed impossible, viz. to the Heraclitean 'flux'. As a result, many sensitive thinkers feel, as touching ethics and religion, that we are in a state of 'sickness unto death'. It is this which has stung men like Karl Heim and Karl Barth desperately awake. They urge, as with trumpet voice, that we are in the spiritual debacle of the centuries, and therefore at the crucial point of destiny. The whole scheme of things is involved, and faith is more critically involved than for centuries past.

It has done for such thinkers as the above, and for others equally sensitive though of different schools of religious thought, what Hume's inferences did for Kant; it marks a revolution of thought, the issue of which will be either clearer light or a deeper darkness. They see that the fundamental issue is - God or 'flux' ! Either the relativity of modern science, or the assured word of God as the Lord of the whole cosmos. It is of ethical and spiritual pertinence. We either anchor by faith in God, or there is no finally assured anchorage for the human soul, and we must needs drift down unknown and unilluminated seas, bound we know not whither.

Not a few clear and far-sighted thinkers see in this present debacle of thought a coming down of the Eternal God vertically upon our chaotic world of thought, shattering every

fancied finality it seemed to have. Science is now more reticent, its earlier affirmations no longer holding the ready assent of the newly awakened mind.

Such a day, nevertheless, is full of hope, since it marks that a deeper dimension is being implicitly demanded. What if it mean that God in His fathomless mercy is refusing to allow us to dwell at peace in our 'split' of the cosmos until we apprehend that it is really 'In Him we live and move and have our being'?

We need God therefore in the present moment. But God is never known save in such a moment. That is the reason why science can never know God, since it can ^{know} only what has occurred, whether a century past or a moment ago. Faith alone can stand, so Karl Heim says, in the living, present moment of God; in the silences of the soul, in its intuitions of the Divine, it apprehends God as science is unable. Science is the 'observer'; faith is the worshipper. 'He made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel.' Such a moment is ever a creative moment. It may appear destructive, but such is only a clearing away of debris, in order to lay deeper foundations.

The effect of all this, is to make us turn more towards Jesus, and to mark more earnestly what He has to say to us as we face this perilous gulf of pessimism. If there is anyone at all, it is He who is most at home within the Divine dimensions. If He fail us, and go the way of all lost illusions then neither in religion nor in science is there a truth

adequate to the situation. We are shut up to Jesus, or, at the best, to agnosticism, at the worst, to pessimism of the atheistic order. Not a few have reached the latter position.

This rather reveals the purpose that underlay the writing of the Fourth Gospel. In an age of crucial need, ^{the writer} he knew that Jesus was the very answer of God to its every phase. Perhaps more than we, he felt that man is never at home in this world, but is always trying to accommodate himself to its sin and death, and his best is only a poor approximation. The Fourth Evangelist saw Jesus standing within the transcendence of God, and standing there with His cross, and as he knew his own need met in vision and experience, so he desired that others share the same. Thus his Gospel must have been conceived and written. In effect, this is what he is trying to say: 'This is how I see Jesus. Look !'

Today the need seems to be similar. The transcendence of Jesus, in His life and in His cross, must be shown as alike credible to mind and heart; also, that it is a faith which is worthy of acceptance, and in which it is good to live though sometimes hazardous. If the present thesis is anything at all, it is a modest attempt of one who has known the dark ways of doubt, and who is grateful for what measure of light he has.

CHAPTER ONETHE PARADOX OF JESUS CHRIST

'Truth may be - perhaps in the end must be -paradoxical. If this is true of ordinary life,preeminently is it true of Christ.How can we vitally express Him in any measure of reality,however minute it may be,unless paradox is freely used? He combines within Himself many seeming contradictories that only yield up their meaning and resolve their differences into unity as we view them in the light of each other. The 'Yea' always lies through the 'Nay',and the one is the illumination of the other.In a measure far beyond our own, He is diversity in profound unity.It is the failure to perceive this that has led so often to division within His Church. Men are enamoured,at times obsessed,by one dominant trait of His person or work - and these two let no man put asunder - invading their experience,that they stress it until it is thrown out of all real perspective,to the infinite loss of faith and mutual love.In a word,Jesus is the poised fulfilment of all life,whether human or Divine,and only as we strive to see Him from all possible angles of perception shall we truly enter into a growing sense of the unexplorable riches of His character and achievement.From this standpoint there spring up paradoxes almost innumerable,one or two of which we may touch upon,each of which has been known in experience.

First,He had His dwelling upon earth,yet,as none other,He abode in the heavenlies.Intensely human,at length,He was

~~at length~~ believed to be unquestionably Divine. He became paradox itself even in His simplest hours. His consciousness of Himself, even as we note it at this distance of time, was an amazingly new thing in man's ambiguous and complex experience - a direct and unbroken consciousness of God. Ours is at the best of an intermittent nature, but not so that of Christ. We never strike a single moment in His life when this phenomenon of spiritual reality is absent. His whole time-day was environed and interpenetrated by the Divine. He wholly lived in God as He wrought at His daily task, either making or mending things. Now to the creative aspect of Deity, He has added that of mending. And no one, perhaps, is now able to state which is the greater, though he can say which is the more merciful task. He filled well the rôle of a village carpenter of olden time, with a tiny street, a cottage home, a parochial environment to bound His dawn and dusk, yet He filled and overflowed all these with the fulness and grace of the Father of His love and vision. He was wrapped up in the Eternal the while His feet were tired and dusty with Nazareth road and labour. 'I and my Father are one' was His word, heard or in spirit overheard, of a later day, and there has been no effective denial of its reality. We can read God in Jesus, whatever our particular idiom of theology may be. Awesome consciousness | this of Jesus, unbearable, unpredictable, unpredicable of any other, even of the greatest genius history can present. It was this spell, this innate perennial sense of the infinite within Him and about, in His word as in His deed, in His influence as well as in His attitude, that most of all

must have drawn and bound the disciples to Him. It has since become the lure of our own wandering hearts.

Life is nothing if it be not a quest for the Divine, yet where we toil, often unto no vision, Jesus leapt as by a surer instinct within. How truly Matthew Arnold's lines summarise our lives:

'We cannot kindle when we will

The fire that in the heart resides',

but they are not a fit summary of Jesus' consciousness. In nature it seems only paralleled by the homing instinct of the bird that obeying something inner, the real nature of which seems as yet unknown, flies across leagues of trackless space and arrives at a land hitherto unreached and unknown. Both consciously and unconsciously Jesus always gave evidence of the homeland of His soul. Even His words, of chance, casual, of the moment only, as it were, called forth to meet some fresh human need, are all bathed in that lone transcendence of spirit. If we meet Him on the road, or gather with Him on the mount of prayer, or hear Him tell out the message that flames within Him, the same fact emerges, an overwhelming awareness of Divine selfhood and possession. The profoundest intuitions seemed always to rise full-orbed within Him, at the heart of which the Face of the Father was clear; without, the same Wonderful One looked back at Him from all creation; let the gaze be upward, and lo! He was filling the eternities, that Father of His filial love. Was there ever such a consciousness as that of Jesus? It beggars all our art and

philosophy to make its nature and origin clear to us, while the unexplored remainder which both these faculties have failed to explicate to us is the vaster part. It seems that there are dimensions in Jesus which even the most erudite study or the best applied talent fails to measure and set forth. Is there more pertinence than we are prepared to admit in that Synoptic saying which holds so much of the Johannine fragrance 'I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight!?' But strange and inexplicable though it be, we have only to go back to the Gospel records as we have them - surely only a fragment of all that the redeemed heart of the early Church must have written - and against the whole manifold background of His life it stands out clear-cut and wholly unmistakable, the most direct sense of eternal reality man has ever known. We find it early, we find it late; we note it exquisite and fragrant in the ingenuous Boy of Twelve, and we discover it with a hushed and awed mind in the Man with the Broken Heart on the Cross. It is 'My Father' from first to last. We never touch this unfathomable Master in any hour, but it stands out clear, the most amazing, the most awesome phase of selfhood time and humanity have ever registered.

His very consciousness of earthly things was an immediate realization of the heavenly. Said Kingsley, 'He never went out into nature save to meet God.' All the landscape spoke thus to

Him, bird and beast and flower, even the coverts of the rocks.

The ~~tiny~~ death of the weakest of creation spoke to Him of the minute care of God. A sparrow became an epiphany. Before it fell to the dust an unseen Hand of infinite care was outstretched to break that fall. So Jesus read His own soul in the universe about Him, a deeper reading than which is both incredible and impossible. The soul of Nature is the immanent God, but in Jesus nature is dwarfed, that is, as a messenger of Divine reality. In the spirit of Jesus, apparently only a tiny negligible part of the whole, He as surely dwelt, and in greater degree and meaning and intensity. The seeming less transcended the apparent greater. More than in all Nature combined, in Jesus He dwelt visibly, audibly, holily, apprehensibly. It is scarcely too much to say that Christ has added a new dimension to the felt divinity of Nature, so full did He read His own soul in it, so vocal with grace - mercy and rest - did He leave it. Certainly it is nearer and dearer to the Christian soul since He dwelt within it; it is not now so far away, so remote and ambiguous in meaning and purpose as it was to the pagan. He has wedded it to the soul of His church, having first given to it the love and exquisite tenderness of His heart. How He loved its hills, and the peace and soft sough of its glades. It is now to a great extent burthened with the Divine message He brought to man, vocal with the sublimity of His spirit. Now it is more of a home, albeit a transient one, than in any preceding age. He has given to it His own inimitable soul, and we are always at home with anything over which He has cast the spell of His spirit.

Secondly, He was strangely care-free and at the same time infinitely careful. His grasp of and interest in earthly conditions were probably the greatest of all time, yet it was for the infinite alone He had real care. His apparent perspective was that of an earth-dweller, but in a truer because deeper sense it was not of time at all - time as we know and confuse it. He confounded the ablest earthly minds of His day, and He does the same still. But then as now the spiritual mind, the mind lying open to the heavenly dimension of things, is always at home in His presence, and His idiom of the Spirit becomes the dialect of its inspired mood. But to the mind that can only accept the shallower earthly dimensional significance, He becomes the most insoluble of all paradoxes. For He is not of the earth, earthly. In the world, apparently wholly of the world, having borne its localised weight for nigh on thirty years, with its burden of tragedy pressing heavily upon His heart, He is never seen as its creature or pupil. He transcends the world whenever we meet Him. He valued things, not as we men see and value them, but according to the rate set upon them by 'The Dweller in the Innermost'. Hence His carefreeness; hence His care. Things secondary in their nature were secondary to Him, no matter what men thought about them, no matter the religious sanctions they might give or desire to give to them. What they really were, that they were to Jesus, and only that. It might be the Temple; or the ruling principle, religious or otherwise, accepted of the day; or the forward-looking aspiration of the nation's dream: but as Jesus looked at and through them there was but one thought, one word He had

for them, 'Not one stone shall be left upon another.' The apotheosis of carelessness hiding an infinite and all-pitying care! They would build a kingdom and placard it throughout the world as the Kingdom of God, but Jesus' carelessness was against it, and it could not, did not stand. This indifference of Jesus is mightier far than the vehement care of men. If all life but came within that dimensional vision and saw its stocks and shares in its light, what a revolution there would of necessity be. But closer still, if only the Church came there also? How often we ~~cut ritualise~~ ^{overlay with ritual} the Galilean! The glamour of 'orders' and 'validities' - what if they deny the profound and saving simplicities of His soul? Is there any ordination save that of the Pierced Hand? Is there any 'Apostolic Succession' save to the soul that comes beneath His spell, and for sheer wonder and love of it follows on to do His will, blithely careless of its cost? Said one who stood nearest to the Incarnate Paradox: 'I count all else as refuse, that I may know Him.' He was happy in being so utterly lost. But that losing is also a paradox, since through it both for the ancient world as for this modern one more realities have been found than can be numbered for multitude. Are we careful where He, and such as these, stood supremely care-free, and careless where He stood exquisitely careful with the awe and care of God stirring within His heart? Is He still the Visionary Divine amid the blind folk of His universe, where vision is still the price of the highest noblest life? Is it only Jerusalem that misses the time of the wonderful visitation,

the visitation that involves supremest destiny? Is God now breaking in within our human order, and are there few that be saved, the majority not even interested whether there be such a thing as supernal salvation? Does not His Church far too often now cause the cheek of Heaven's Lord to be wet with the tear of heart-rending agony? ~~Cause~~^{Do} we yet ~~cause~~^{cause} other Gethsemanes?

The secret of this phase of paradox surely must be seen in that the normal abiding experience of Jesus' life was this innate intimate sense of the Father's environing care. As we think of our own changing angles of standpoint and being, the wonder grows that Jesus never found occasion to change His. He saw, knew, and experienced that care from first to last, to the very verge of death, passing out into an appalling sense of utter desolation. His 'Dark Night of the Soul'⁽²⁾ even could not loosen His hold on God, though it seems as though in His own individualised experienced in the most crucial moment of that awful hour the grip of God on Him was as though it had been lifted. But who can read with any finality the content of that Calvary darkness? One can only stand and love and worship. He is doing for both man and God what God alone can do, and man cannot. His very witness to its intensity but makes the inner reality stand out in more awesome grandeur. There is a sublimity of tenderness and passionate attachment running its line of wonder through that dread hour, through its word of forsakenness, to that of 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' It was this intense ~~care~~^{care} for God Himself, for the Divine in every-

thing, in every hour, every happening, every soul, that made Him so immune from the carking care that so terribly distracts us. It extinguished all mean cares, as though they had never existed. His 'Take no thought for tomorrow' is the last word on faith, on religion in its very essence; it is the independence of Divine dependence. All men may say it and in it glory when they stand just where He stood, in the position and certitude of being enveloped in the unfailing care of the Father. At any other standpoint, it is the most outrageous paradox that can obsess the care-driven soul of man.

Thirdly; No one ever stood so near to man, and at the same time remained so aloof. Unless we see a gulf and a Christ bridging it in His cross, it may well be that we neither know Him nor His God. It also follows, that we do not know our own selves either. As we mentioned at first, to know Jesus we must be acquainted in some measure with the world in which He daily lived, and the world in which He would never live. The first epistle of John sums up such unforgettably: Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.' No one loved and gave himself to man as Jesus did, and yet was so free from him and his ways as was He. He loved men and women, and especially children, with a passion of love unrepeated in the history of the race - the world's eternal epic of love. He gave Himself to their need and desire throughout all those inimitable hidden and manifested years. At length He died in their midst, died for them because both God and man willed

and needed that He so die. But, save in the love He bore them, He was never held by them, no, not so much as an hour. We always find Him Lord, though never in the despotic sense, since the 'Servant' of Isaiah's prophesy is its deep content. If indeed it is true that 'He reigns from the Tree', then it is also true that Isaiah might have written his 53rd chapter at its foot. Perhaps he did, since only one within the timeless realm of the Spirit could have written thus. It is fitting, then, that when Jesus is seen stooping to wash the disciples' feet, dusty as they were bodily and spiritually, He is still seen as Lord, never more. It is eternity cleansing time. 'Ye call me Master and Lord. Ye say well, for so I am.' He was held by the will of one world only, the world of God. He obeyed one Spirit only, the Holy Spirit. Was ever stranger paradox?

His haunting intimacy with man hides in order to reveal in the fitting hour a difference, an aloofness, that bespeaks an eternal distinction. It has no pride, is never laboured at, never stressed but save in the silent constraint of influence, naturally and pervasively made itself known as the delicate perfume of hidden violets in a memoried Devon lane. It was so strange to the hearts of His disciples that they often could not understand Him - He spoke as One from across the gulf. He was so near, yet in an instant so unspeakably afar off - vide His rebuke of Peter even at Caesarea Philippi - that He amazed them in the moment and act of drawing them to Him. It needed the perspective of an agonized Calvary and an amazing Olivet to make them see how like, yet unlike, the world of men He was; how near to them in

love, how far from them in moral isolation. It all ran down to the central deeps of His soul; and how could they plumb the infinitely deep spaces of His being? It was not an isolation willed as an isolation. He was no hermit to whom the thought and presence of other men and women would be an intrusion. On the contrary, He was drawn to man as by an irresistible force - such is the affirmation of the Incarnation. 'He must needs go through Samaria' - and elsewhere. Assuming the truth of the Church's creed concerning Christ's advent - one can hardly imagine that to our Lord's mind He would think of His coming as a descent; or that it would be welcome to Him that men should praise Him for even the vast stoop to the desolation of the Cross: paradoxically, He never rose so high as in the hour when 'HE became obedient unto death'. Hence this aloofness of spirit was not something willed or desired by Jesus; any more than that desperate weeping of His over doomed Jerusalem. This aloofness was the effect of what is so deeply entrenched even now in man, a characteristic quality not discoverable in God. It was sin that dug the deeper than creatural abyss between the soul of man and the Christ. He was ever Himself, and could be no other and no less; hence the gulf. A tragic reality. And He must enter that gulf, fill it and so end it, in order to save doomed man. But He neither denied the gulf nor accepted it as final. The gulf declared itself.

Thus out of His union with God, out of that nearness to and distance from man, issued His condemnation of the world. No cynic has condemned as did He, yet was He no cynic; the very quality of His nature, the love of His heart could not permit it. And He

ever read man in His love, for such became the lens of His vision. And He also read man in God; hence He never forsook the most lost of prodigal hearts. He therefore condemned the world because He would save it, and at any cost. He was reality itself, and at its deepest ethical point, hence was at home in the greatest of dimensions, consequently could do no other than oppose the unreality of sin unto its destruction. He did it first in His heart; then from His cross; now we believe from ~~of~~ His throne. And that condemnation is the essential preparation for man's redemption. The power of sin lies deep within man, and its grip is as mighty, but the soul that comes within the sense of His condemnation knows the inner working of a force, a 'dunamis', mightier far than his love of sin. Deep indeed is sin, but that indictment of Christ runs deeper. Fearful, at times beyond all telling, is the harrowing of sin, but the repentance brought about by the Son of Man bites with a keener and a cleaner edge, and under such aseptic pain the soul of the human approaches deliverance. In Christ's own words, inter alia 'the Gates of Hades' shall not prevail against that condemnation and its resultant - an imperative and inevitable repentance. His condemnation is the first approach to the imperial highway leading to His final 'Well done'. His indictment is the initial phase of our emancipation unto the ultimate glory of God's redeeming presence. There is no love as His, no such future as it contains, no passion so real and so deep and so saving, but who among even the finest of men can stand unabashed unto the very

soul before the exceeding blaze of His holy invective? His words are unparalleled in the history of literature, in that of the soul. He condemns us that He may call us; sinlessly He stands aloof that He may draw us nearer than our most wistful dream of mercy; He brings us to the dust that He may lift us beyond the unsullied stars; and that condemnation becomes at once the bitter agony of our soul and the saving Gospel of our spirit. For He never scorns us, never denies us, never turns us down, never leaves us either to our best or our worst - either of which would be a calamity - prodigals at heart though we be.

In this sense, as in so many others, He is the easiest Master and the hardest; the Master of the 'scourge of small cords', and of the heartbreak over a blinded and doomed Jerusalem; a phase of the mighty reason why the world through its years moves quicker and still more quickly to His pierced feet. Coming into that paradoxical presence, it knows that it must be condemned in order to be saved; that it must feel the depth of the awful abyss from out which only His arm can save it; and remembers that as it comes out of its shuddering waste that it has seen Him there. 'He was made sin for us, He who knew no sin'. 'He was made a curse for us.' What paradox! No wonder theology uncovers its head and worships at such a disclosure, since it transcends all thought. It is here that thought is drowned in waters all too deep for conjecture; all too fathomless for correct formulae. 'The waters went over His soul'. Similarly a Master of platitudes would be as one inane. Only the Lord who can thunder from chilly, awe-struck

Sinai, who nevertheless can also climb His Calvary, can be real enough and holy enough to save its sinful almost lost soul. There is but one in history so far who has borne the weight of such a paradox and whether we love the taste of orthodoxy or apparent heterodoxy - and who has the sensitive balance to weigh either without fault or blame? - we can but own Him Lord, and more than that no man knoweth or can know. There are those who glory in naught else. Nor are they the least amid the princes of men. But no matter who we be, by whatever perishing tag our names be linked, in the most solemn hours of insight and quickening there is but one place for us all - upon our knees in the quest of His pardon, the pardon of the Nazarene, the wonder being that in our deepest heart we account it as the valid pardon of Almighty God. It is there our unquiet conscience enters upon 'the peace that passeth understanding', which

'Is not quiet, and is not ease,
But something deeper far than these.'

In the ranging silences of such an hour, it is His unforgettable touch within inner places that enables us to see sin as it actually is - that is, as far as we can see it, not as He must. The scales fall if and when He so deal with us. There is a purging of the dark stain, though its sting may abide for our discipline. The saints of His nearing Presence are the greatest sufferers, not the sinner. Our race is pre-eminently of an empirical turn of mind; we refuse to accept aught save at the touchstone of experience, yet 'He who knew no sin' has placarded it throughout

the world as the one thing in human life with which the Eternal will have no dealings save to destroy it. And its end, therefore, has already known its beginning, hence the aloofness of the Galilean. Its condemnation within the soul is the actual beginning of real spiritual life. The vision that appals is the ^{that} light, appeals; it is the light of home and welcome. The voice that uttered our condemnation, voices a Gospel beyond our desert.

Fourthly, He never stood for intrusion, yet has thrust, and that deliberately, His authority upon the heart and conscience of all time. He is the Lord of the human soul because most of all He has compelled it to dare with Him the experience of the Light Ineffable. Though He died for the world, yet did He offer Himself for the salvation of the lowliest individual, as though he alone needed saving. He has made priestism, be it Roman or Anglo-Roman, a superfluity in the lone life of man, a potential betrayal of royal inherent privilege. There is but one Priest, but we call Him by a greater name, Redeemer, and to the sufficiency of Christ can no man make an addition. If it be deemed possible, it suggests the need of deeper vision, being a product of a pre-Christian era. He would permit no intrusion of any class within the rights of the soul, nor would He intrude Himself. The latch must be lifted from within. No one respected this great fact more than Jesus; nevertheless with all deliberation He has thrust His authority upon man's spirit to such an extent that He is now unescapable - certainly to those who awaken to the sense of the Divine in Him, and the wonder of His answer to their need.

But His intrusion upon the soul is the negation of no single right. His inbreaking is of the simplest, most Divine order. He comes but as the dawn knocking upon the gateways of vision. He but knocks as light ! But the reverberation of that knocking means more to the soul than the many forcible enterings of all others. They come with their purely relative authority, relative to the quality of their being, often, as it were, 'of the earth, earthy'. Their comings and goings in comparison are as the tiny ripples on an otherwise undisturbed stretch of water. But His authority, relative to His own supernal nature and power, is as the tidal surge and urge of lunar forces. He will never intrude is He not the Lord of courtesy? - yet His coming is of a destiny beyond known destiny, the incursion of the ~~terrestrial~~ ^{Divine} upon the mortal, and altogether beneficent.

Thus His authority, even on a superficial acquaintance, is seen to hail from far, and its journey of redemption is beyond the range of man's vision. All man's 'further hope' is eclipsed in the fact of His love, the plenitude of His sacrifice, the promise of His pardon in its length and depth and height. His authority is all this, and all we cannot see or know but only feel must lie within it. It is the most austere thing and the most gracious. It beggars thought but becomes the light of experience and its power. It eludes us yet holds us; shames us, but makes us incredibly His own. It is altogether of God, yet man's indweller. It is His own Presence within us, and therefore in time operative for eternity. Its nature? It is neither in the Book as a Book, nor in the Church built from out its pages and promises

and realizations, but in His own soul, and in that soul in sacrifice. Was it not Forsyth who said that it did not need Calvary to be itself, but to reveal itself, and to cut a highway from out the Father to man's heart. The authority of Christ is just Christ Himself, and Him can no man measure.

We discover it not in any abstract interpretation of its nature, but in the Christ Himself, in our surrender to Him, in our responsive obedience to His discerned will. Our insight into it is possible through our experience of it. We rule the world of our temptations as well as of our ambitions by its dominion over us. He who is its slave is the world's master, and over him it has no power; its flame cannot harm a hair of his head. That same authority of the Christ brings proud man to the dust; it leaves him the only upright and freed soul in creation. Thus this very attribute of Christ is seen to be as paradoxical as He is Himself. The Roman slave - patrician also - upon whom its lure fell early in the Church's history became the only aristocrat of the Empire worth calling by that oft-abused title. It was discovered to be the authority within which alone man may be free. There was a proud Pax Romana, but the inner peace of Christ was of an infinitely deeper dimension. The very stars held no such depth as that. Strangely enough, it came home to man, as it still comes, from out man's greatest crime, Calvary; it is as often yearned for by the world as it is despised by its blindness; it will not let the world alone since in peace alone

of this order is there rest, which the weary world so deeply needs; hence it becomes in one issue the world's blessing, in another its bane - its refusal means a step into deeper darkness and a profounder disquiet. It is the arrest of the world before an implacable bar of purity, yet is it the answer to its need. This authority then is as much a paradox as is His person; it is both explainable - on its own conditions of vision - and inexplicable when these are refused. It can enter therefore our understanding, yet is not delimited by our comprehension. That is, it holds a deeper dimension than we possess, or, better, than we are. In comparison our knowledge of it is as a 'split' or cross-section of its nature. As a result, our experience of its grace may be valid enough for the eternities, while our theory of its nature and scope and goal may be utterly if not pitifully futile. Faith in the soul of a man is what binds him to his Lord, not the theories he may carry through or discard on the way of his pilgrimage. And yet we at times deny a fellow-Christian the right to the Sacred Name, 'because he followeth not with us', his 'shibboleth' not being as our own !

Would we share that authority? Would we thus have His outlook on God and man and the destiny wrought out in interaction? Then must we stand where and as He stood. Then must we dare His surrender and thus share His vision. Only so may we look out as through His eyes, the lens of an unclouded soul penetrating the deeps of God's eternal soul, hence His eternity itself. Purity of impeccable holiness became Jesus' vision, and vision ever merged into response, and the measure of His response was the

measure of His soul, and of it all was born His authority. 'This man speaketh with authority and not as the scribes'. It is the obverse, hidden to all but an intimate few, of His 'must'. Jesus knew - how we know not, it lies still within His soul as deeply as when He 'set His face as a flint to go to Jerusalem - that He must step out in utter surrender would He traffic with the unseen, which surrender from earliest youth to Calvary's summit is the summary of His life. He did so, with the result that the invisible became visible to Him, the inaudible to the world of man became the message of His soul, now for us the fathomless saving mercy of God. It led Him to Calvary, from which still His people believe as strongly as ever that He passed in resurrection to His throne. He immolated Himself upon that Cross only to know a range of life and power defying description, in comparison with which earthly dynasties are as nothing. He was thus selflessness itself, yet a greater self never existed. As Forsyth once said, He knew He was the world's only Peacemaker, yet He purposely upset the world against Himself and thus against itself, rent it as never before asunder, in order to leave it no rational decision but to love and follow Him. And the paradox is that though He never permitted thought of Himself to hold His mind for one moment, yet He thrust Himself upon the world of power and pride and thought and sin as the Supernal One to whom the soul at long last or in the immediate moment must submit itself absolutely. He even allowed the world of priest, governor, petty king, and misguided populace to have their fell will over Him, yet in the

hour they did their worst to Him, as Watson used to say, He wrought His best, and their authority over Him He turned into His authority over the world. He was never more authoritative than in the hour when man in his representatives would only offer Him a Cross of shame and a sepulchre, the cost of which, in all probability, a carpenter's scanty earnings in Nazareth could not have bought. He would be Himself, selfless to the last, but by the grace of God, the transcript of which His people affirm is the love of His own heart, He is the World's Saviour. Like so many other words of more or less weighty predication, He has actually taken that proud word from the hands of Caesars and Kings and has given it a connotation of dimensional range as to attach it for ever to God's eternal throne. Whence it has issued that the empire of His day, which denied Him its vaunted justice, has torn down within its Seven Hills its pagan throne, and has built one in its stead as His. It may not be quite the kind of throne many of His 'far ben' disciples think most worthy, and as representative of Him who came 'meek of heart', nevertheless it stands as a type of what man, forgiven greatly, is attempting to do - to give Him the best ^{that} mind and heart and soul can call into being. They hold - and indeed their reality has its own right to be heard as at least a phase of authentic life - that life's best is all too unworthy for Him who flung Himself into the yawning gulf of their sin that its abysses be not their doom at the last. They have a right to be heard as men therefore who have looked upon the very worst, and at aathomless cost have

seen One forging out a Gospel for their deliverance, for whom in consequence they cannot find a Name that can compass His fulness of nature and work. And it is such men and women of every race and order who proclaim that there is no Saviour such as He, that He has become their own, and that for such unspeakable mercy they cannot stammer out the least adequate gratitude, though they 'speak with the tongues of angels'. It is natural then in their early records of profound experience to find this written:

'When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead.
And He laid His right hand upon me ----. '

the Pierced Hand of an unforgettable benediction. Nor is it strange to learn that thereafter that man saw and heard what transcends earthly thought as the heavens the earth. And He saw his Lord on the Final Throne. Of course, utter paradox, but what if it be Final Truth?

Fifthly, we may dare to believe, on the evidence of all the data we now possess, that although the doors leading on to God are necessarily everywhere, always open, and multitudinous, yet Jesus is the Door, and that through Him men and women attain unto God as by no other means. 'I am the Door' may be termed as Johannine but it is the language of Jesus' heart. Moreover, it has its own strict parallels in the Synoptists - 'Follow me', 'Come ye after me'. And it is an idiom that is understood everywhere, and has associations of great meaning in every race. A traveller in the East passed a night with a shepherd, and was surprised to find that the sheepfold had an unclosed opening.

In response to his word concerning danger to the sheep, and the need of a door behind which the sheep might abide in safety, the shepherd simply said, 'I am the door'. It was unforgettable. Before the sheep could be touched by the pang of a wild beast, that body stretched out across the opening must first be attacked and mastered.

In the experience of His people, Jesus has been not only safety but vision and access to regions formerly unknown. To men of every race into which He has been introduced by His disciples Jesus has opened vistas in to the Divine nature deeper than any messenger before Him. He has unlocked the most hidden recesses of God beyond the intuitions either of ancient or modern thought. Still He offers Himself as the means of such spiritual apprehension, and without question it is the first and last wonder of human life. And Plato said that wonder was the beginning of philosophy.

Whatever then we may make of Jesus, by whatever category we may seek to exhibit what He has been to life and thought, it seems a matter of sheer impossibility to keep Him on the plane of the purely human. It is always being attempted, however. But to do so would be to make a kind of palimpsest of His real nature, writing upon such our own shallower and more superficial conceptions. He does not wholly fit into our world, and it is to our glory that He cannot be made so to fit. Frequently, in Church history, such an attempt has been the removal of the 'candlestick', with the sense that strangely enough the world has grown darker; twilight, not dawn. It gives one pause. It should.

Sixthly, Jesus though He stands clearest on the far line of history is yet mystery personified. All the Gospels and the Epistles are as one in this. Hoskyns has shown that we cannot pit one against another on the score of change of meaning. All we can do is to show change of time and place and emphasis. The whole of the New Testament comes to us with the imprimatur of the Early Church. It is the manifold record of her experience, at the heart of which is an amazing gratitude. It is not easy therefore now to pit the Fourth Gospel against the Synoptists, and call one theology and the other historical record. They are all deeply theological, and all are built upon the foundation of the historical. They are all charged with the purpose to make Jesus as real to others as He has been to them. Their cumulative effect is a sense of profoundest mystery, which is at the same time a wonderful revelation. A fair summary of the New Testament Christ is that He 'cannot be other than a stranger and an enigma to the modern world'.

Naturally, a systematic mind or school endeavours to sum up Jesus in some relatively final formula, or category of thought or experience, but there is always an elusiveness about Him that baffles, almost denies, every such attempt. Not that He would not be known, but that He must be known within His own world. He refuses also to be seen as an 'aspect' of the whole: He is the soul of the world. Jesus therefore embodies His own conditions of apprehension, refusal of which spells inability of vital interpretation. There, 'ye shall know the truth, and the truth

shall make you free.' Time and again it has been affirmed that a given lesser presentation may be accepted as the full explication of His life; but Jesus has moved on, and left it stranded. The statement may sincerely have expressed the author's mind, but its failure was that it was not His mind. Jesus left it untouched, and it perished. He must touch as His own every word that would illumine His person. He is therefore mystery still to millions. The issue is the same, viz. an inability to delimit wholly His being and word and work.

Moreover, He is mystery not on a minimum but on a maximum scale, i.e. it is not as the horizontal mysteries of human life. There is the definitely vertical in Jesus; He suggests God at every point. Such seems unescapable to those who have known Him in any real measure. Jesus is always opening out on regions other than our own, and they are native to His life. He moves easily where we only flounder or founder. 'The Person of Jesus is exactly the point in the Christian religion where the intellect feels overwhelmed by mysteries it cannot resolve, yet where Christian experience finds the factors of its most characteristic qualities, and the Church the truth it has lived by and is bound to live for.' (3) It is mystery and light, neither of which denies the other. 'I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep my deposit until that day', is but one of a million similar experiences. Christian experience, therefore, attests the fact that Jesus illumines life and its future as in God's final

purpose, lucid and intelligible and the giver of blithe courage. In Fairbairn's cryptic word, 'As the world is embosomed in the Infinite, so is Jesus in God'. (4)

What Christian faith therefore states, and with deep conviction, is that 'for us men and for our salvation' Jesus has opened out and explicated even the hidden mystery of God, not as one approaching it with a view to its discovery, but as one who shares it, whose very life and home it has always been. Naturally, never has such a paradox haunted the minds of men before; also, and it is equally pertinent, we are only able to enter that region when in daring faith we are prepared to hold our all at hazard for His sake. The Fourth Evangelist who has known not a little of its truth, affirms that it is the finality of privilege, and tells us folk of lesser vision that Jesus has given to the majesty of God a more tender name, lest the human sinful heart be appalled. He has shown Jesus' spirit also laid alongside the needy human spirit; has revealed a love more holy than men had thought possible, yet not cease to be love in every essential, steeped also in a glory that awes the heart and binds it in devotion to the Giver. The marvel of this Gospel is that there is no mark of presumption whatever, but only the sense of an exceeding mercy that has visited and redeemed his whole nature. In his pages Jesus is seen transforming mystery into benediction, not at the cost of its holiness, but by letting the disciple see His own life as of similar nature, through becoming on earth its personal vindication. John saw Him. It is a

mystery now, as Cameron phrased it, not of darkness but of light, the mysteries of the light being deeper than those of the night. Paul sums it up for us, as no one else: 'The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.'

Is it any wonder then that a paradox so foreign to our shallower dimensional conceptions arouses in every generation violent controversies? No sooner does one controversy die down in being more or less adequately met, ~~than~~ another takes its place. It is recorded that 'there was no room for Him in the inn', and in every age since, place for 'His crib' has been vehemently refused. The fact is that whenever a new dimension dawns there is of necessity a revolution in everything germane to that particular situation. It must either be accepted or fought out to a bitter finish. And it would probably be a calamity if the Christ could come into any age, and there be tamely accepted. That surely would be Doceticism in its worst form. Christ is the last paradox of our space-time world, and He compels us to account for Him in some measure of adequacy. That spells conflict at deepest levels. Hence it is that each generation has its own specific controversy with Christ. 'Who' say ye (in this present moment) that I am?' He demands an answer appropriate to that hour. Today, for example, we are not concerned with the Messiah per se, but we are concerned with the possibility that He may be the Eternal incarnate. But what a revolution must follow in every bit of our modern life ! Our trouble today is that we are not facing Him adequately. And we must face Him on His own world, though of

necessity we inhabit our own. And then we have to see those Pierced Hands lifting up our shallower world into His own deeper dimensional world. That is redemption. It cost Him His all to do so. Frequently, perhaps always, as with Paul, it demands a like totality of surrender on the part of the man who would belong to His strange world. It is just here that a real contrast has to be faced. The Church is hardly ever at a loss to explain what He has been to her soul; but, on the other hand, she is always stammering when she tries to make clear what He is in Himself. He is paradox on all sides; He demands, yet refuses, final explication. All the more reason is there to point out, not for dogma but for truth's sake, that the 'mystery' of Christ must still be further off from the gaze of empiricists and pure historians. To fathom His secret, they must be more, and must go deeper. A mere 'observer' will never know Him. If disciple and lover fail, even while they worship and love, is it surprising that those who are not so 'far ben' detect no vital difference between Him and other teachers, ancient and modern, of the Divine? In the Agrapha, it has been given wonderfully: 'Jesus said, "My mystery is for me and for the sons of my house".' If there is any infallible ground of authority, it is somewhere near here, i.e. between the colloquy of disciple and Master. If any one can say - and it becomes as 'the Light than never was on sea or land' - 'I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded', then no one can rob that soul of his inner illumination, since it is 'Where thieves do not break through and steal'. Moreover, it is found adequate for life and death, and for hope beyond both.

There is room then for a very exalted Christology. We simply cannot magnify Jesus of Nazareth too much. Despite His apparent lowly origin, despite the fact that all along He has been a 'stumbling block' (as Borchert so tersely shows ⁽⁵⁾) to hosts of human ideas and aspirations, He more than fills our highest and profoundest categories, and overflows all such to an extent that only in terms of supreme predication can we set Him forth. 'Two things Jesus has done. He has dared to lay claim to the most exalted office which the mind of man has ever imagined for man. And He has proceeded to place upon that office the interpretation of "the Servant"----. With this colossal paradox He has overpowered the world.' 'We cannot debar Him from the highest place.' ⁽⁶⁾

Otto has enriched theology with his contribution of the 'numinous', though quite a number of thinkers suggest a fair measure of emendation. He bids us mark in an experience recorded of Peter 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord' that it has the same quality of numinous feeling as that recorded of Isaiah. 'The feeling', he says, 'is beyond question not that of transgression of the moral law, however evident it may be that such a transgression where it has occurred will involve it as a consequence: it is the feeling of absolute profaneness --- it comes with piercing acuteness and is accompanied by the most uncompromising judgment of self-depreciation, a judgment passed, not upon character because of individual profane actions of his, but upon his own very existence as creature before that which is supreme above all creatures' ⁽⁷⁾. Thus that same writer would have

us mark that in the New Testament God is not seen as less holy than in the Old Testament, but more holy. 'The interval between the creature and Him is not diminished but made absolute.' () It is a far cry from Galilee to the hour of the Quaker poet, Whittier, yet that sensitive man is compelled from out a relatively unscarred life - for we are all scarred - to write:

'Thou judgest us, Thy purity
Doth all our lusts condemn.
The love that draws us nearer Thee
Is hot with wrath to them.' (Our Master)

What is this but a modern poetic version of the essential quality of the 'Pericope' of the Fourth Gospel? The woman has practically been condemned to death by stoning, yet something in Jesus, even in His silence, awakens more than a sense of shame, and the self-righteous accusers shrink out of His presence. They could not stand that influence; it stung! Not a little of the perennial animosity against Jesus in every generation is this sense of dire ethical and spiritual generation. Unless one would be a better man, one cannot long endure the 'Great White Throne' in the market-place or near one's private life.

How it all reveals the inseparability of Jesus from God ! The two names now connote the same awe and -more wonderful still- the same redemption. 'Between Thee and God men shall no longer distinguish', said Renan. Granted that there may be more rhetoric than adoration in this word, nevertheless it expresses the deepest faith of hosts of men and women down the ages. In and through Jesus they endured the face of God - and were redeemed !

The paradox is more marked when we note the amazing fact

that God is not belittled by the relatively small stature of Jesus. On the contrary, Jesus magnifies the majesty of God as the most monotheistic prophet of Israel -and they are the deepest thinkers on this matter of any age-was unable to do. The vertical line of the Infinite is not shortened in Jesus.. Paul (cf. Phil. ii. II) is reaching after this truth when he says, 'Jesus Christ is Lord (\neq JHVH) to the glory of the Father', i.e. the more highly we think of Christ, the more we glorify God. And the glory of God is never so deep, so real, so august, as when we see it crowned by a vicarious 'Crown of Thorns'. Without loss of essential meaning, without diminishing God's transcendence, the name of Jesus again and again can be substituted for His name. It is the quality of His own mind and heart, of His own Holy Spirit, that compels the reverent heart to accept Jesus' name as the equation of the Eternal, and to be prepared to risk the whole of the future on such an acceptance.

That being so, there is no deeper mystery in the whole cosmos than that of Jesus. To every believing heart, He is inescapable, a reality that must be given supreme predication. 'Et teneo et teneor' is the motto of Spurgeon's College, and a hand is shown grasping a cross - 'I both hold and am held'. No Grecian, even of the most daring and sublime genius, would have dared the cross as his deepest summary of the Divine in life. Jesus has wrought that incredible miracle. It is now life's greatest truth, its gladsome Gospel. As a result, on every ultimate problem His light is falling; on every suffering, His meaning and inspiration; on every final road of life is the signpost of the cross; in

every ethnic there is His profound emphasis on God's holiness, sacrificial sovereignty, or ethics is accounted as empirical as any other science, to be discussed at our leisure, accepted or laid aside as it fits in with our scheme of things. Thus to say that the one-time Carpenter of Nazareth illumines far and near horizons is not rhetoric but sober fact, and as inescapable as light, as the thought of God Himself. 'Lord, to whom can we go but to Thee---?' is not merely a New Testament phrase, nor a pious sentiment to be dissolved by the acids of reason and cool commonsense; it is the heart's deepest and most deliberate intuition, apart from which the world grows strangely dark. Jesus said: 'I am the light of the world.' And if that light is put out, what then? Is there another who can illumine this world's life and its future? When Jesus is missed, men again begin to question whether there be any future at all. An aftermath indeed.

But this is not to make Jesus the most insoluble problem of all, a cruel addition to this problem-haunted age. On the contrary, it is God's sovereign solution to all our major problems leaving us the lesser for our discipline and development. There is an addition: it is that of final assurance which gives us 'rest through His sorrow, and life by His death'. As a result, Jesus has set the world a singing as it never sang prior to His coming, not even in laughter-loving Greece. But there, as her poets delved deeper, the songs again and again died down and away. Men and women sing Christ's praises, however, when their cheeks are drenched with tears. They even affirm that they saw Him, at one time, weep, though never for Himself. Thus He is their epic song.

As no one else, He has given them the world of life and death as His trysting place, even 'the Valley of the Shadow', and they discover that He maintains His word. His forgiveness is His answer to their problem of sin; His purity cleanses the inner life; His care transforms weakness and sorrow; His resurrection becomes His promise, 'Because I live, ye shall live also'.

It is by way of such experiences that Jesus creates the eye that sees Him as He is. They venture upon His command, and their ^{problem} [^] 'solvitur ambulando'. The axiom of His Church therefore is that faith in Him brings the discovery of what He is in Himself. It was said of a lady botanist, that she was so engrossed in her work at the foothills of the Alps that she never noticed their grandeur. She had eyes for lesser things. The eye is made by what it seeks, by what masters it. Hence, perhaps, the reason why so many erudite and sincere historians have never known the glory of the Risen Christ. They endorse the severe claims of reason, but they do not make the perilous committal of the whole life to Him. 'My mystery is for me and for the sons of my house.' Severe, but so it stands. We accept our final faith as on the edge of the precipice of unreserved committal, of sheer self-surrender to his majesty, and often in perilous darkness. In not a few instances, it has been a matter of life or death. The fact is, that Jesus establishes, as of spiritual necessity, His own conditions, and these are they. The pure observer, the outsider, no matter his skill and acumen in other departments of learning, has no real lot in this supreme matter. The definitely committed man is the one who understands the Christ.

The paradox of Jesus seems only to be resolved when, in the last issue, we see Him standing within the dimensions of God. The complementary truth then dawns on one, Jesus there becomes the sovereign grace of God to the human soul. This does not underscore Doceticism, but it does teach the full value of the Incarnation. Jesus is not man quâ man: He is the Son of Man who also is the Son of God. Such is the catholic faith of the Church of Christ, by whatever name locally she may be known. It has been found that on other planes of interpretation, Jesus is inexplicable. One recalls the story of a lady looking at a painting of Venice by Turner, and saying to him: 'But, Mr. Turner, I never saw Venice like that!' 'No, Madam', he replied, 'but would you not like to be able?' Ruskin has said that if an inch were cut from any of Turner's paintings, within that inch eternity would be discovered. Of that order, though vastly deeper, was the early experience of Jesus on the part of His disciples. It disclosed itself slowly to them, but at last the vision was theirs- they understood Jesus in God, and they were His for ever. They knew that that was His world; His love was of that supernal order; they lifted Calvary even, in thought, within that realm: thus love became adoration, and His cross became their Gospel, and the caprice of following was transmuted into absolute obedience as a man renders to God. They resolved the Paradox thus: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory.' The world is now resolving it through them, but all too slowly and imperfectly.

THE UNIQUENESS OF HIS PERSON

I. What He Shares With Us.

a) He was a Man and a Worker.

There have been times when the Christian Church has sought to make this truth almost of a Docetic nature by stressing over against it the profounder note of 'the Son of God', 'the Lord from heaven'. It is one of the gifts of the Unitarian Church - a gift we may frankly acknowledge - that now we see more clearly the Man as the early disciples saw Him, as clearly, that is, as the mist of the years will permit us. There need be no fear that this will rob Jesus of any transcendent element the Christian has discerned in Him. Though He does stand out as unequivocally man, we are compelled by the quality of His human life to predicate a deeper and higher connotation than we can of any other historical figure. 'Even though it is difficult', says Fairbairn, 'to suppose that the history recorded by the Evangelists was at any time free from Christological significance ---- yet they write as historians and not as theologians. It is the career of a Man, at a certain date, in a certain part of the world, they describe. They affirm that behind the Man, inextricably connected with His words and with His actions, with His very Person, is God. But the Man sleeps, suffers, prays, and dies. Whatever else He may be, He is a man. -- But in telling their tale they created the only true

κτῆμα 'εὐαγγέλιον' (2)

The Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel alike bear witness

to the man and the worker. The term 'carpenter', found throughout the Gospels, bears testimony to that impression of acquaintance with manual labour He made upon the people about Him. The covert sneer underlying the occasional use of the word guarantees its genuineness as a factor of His human reality. Jesus bore such, and His transmutation of its gibe into reverent honour attests the validity of the portrait thus given. The human touches in the Fourth Gospel are remarkably clear and impressive, e.g. the terms 'flesh', 'wearied', and 'wept'. - 'The Christ of the Fourth Gospel', says Hodgson, 'is the most consistently and (if I may use the word) staggeringly human of all the portraits of Him in the New Testament.' (3) Mark is more brusque in his presentation; his Gospel is more like the first sketch of an artist, though on that very account of priceless value. Matthew is more frankly Jewish. Luke bespeaks the Gentile scholar visioning His Lord. But all alike attest the 'Man from Nazareth'. But how unspeakably human is that exquisite touch in the 1st Epistle of John: 'Our hands have handled (ἐψήλασαν) φησὶν, learned as the sensitive fingers of the blind the contours of a face for the after memory) the Word of Life - a simplicity of phrase only matched by its sublimity. Burkitt's thought is pertinent, viz. that in no early Christian document is the real humanity of Jesus so emphasised as in the Fourth Gospel. He makes the distinction that while it is an inference, in the Synoptists, in the Fourth it is a dogma⁽⁴⁾. The beauty is, however, that it was real.

The fact is that for its conflict as for its comfort, the Church had to anchor its data to the Man. In the Fourth Gospel, in several directions, we have more of a later conflict, since when it was written, presumably, the Church was combating the nascent gnosticism which later became such a terrible foe to the evangelical faith. It was this, Burkitt suggests, which drove the fighting Church back upon its definite historical data. (5) In no age, however, has the Church been able to dispense with the human quality of our Lord's life. If for the sake of our deepest faith we have unambiguously to postulate transcendent factors in His personal life, nevertheless it is at our gravest peril that we do so to the extent of minimising the obvious traits of His essential humanity. Nolluth rightly affirms that if the Fourth Gospel is the supreme revelation of the Divine, it no less reveals the complete humanity of our Lord. It is as far as it can be from any Docetic taint. (6) Such is all in line with Jesus' own word and attitude. 'Jesus knows Himself as human. He is one of ourselves. He is a man. He is fully human.'

This is not to say, however, that what is inherent within the average man or even a genius is His measure. Otto Borchert stresses the dying word of Lavater: 'the unfathomableness of Jesus'. (7) One meets that quality in Jesus whenever one truly comes into contact with Him. It is Jesus incarnate, e.g. within a searching word, or in a mood of awe, in a final truth, or experiencing an unspeakable loneliness. 'Terrible and without number are the doubts of a believing Christian, but the unfathomableness of Christ conquers them all.' (8) If there

is one indubitable fact which modern criticism has laid bare (vide Schweitzer 'Quest of the Historical Jesus') it is that Jesus is a stranger beyond all others, one who occupies a class wholly by Himself. He refuses every category as finally adequate to His Person. Indeed, it may be that categories will never be able to set Him forth. 'He breaks through language and escapes.' Borchert set out to show that Jesus was so unique that up to this modern age He has remained a cosmic 'stumbling block'. It was characteristic of Him as the Messiah; it created opposition within His own circle, and stood out against almost every idea that summed up the outlook of His day. The reactions of history, ancient and modern, bear tribute to this factor. Modern Germany reveals it. (9) Jesus set such an imperious standard, coupled with His lowly origin, that there is that in Him which draws unregenerate man to his feet in unqualified antagonism. This very difference reveals the fact that Jesus as Man lived by standards other than those accepted by man ^{quâ} man. Jesus is an 'offence', though happy are they, nay 'blessed', that are not offended. He is like yet other than we are. There are heights revealed which we have not climbed, depths not plumbed, ranges not explored. Yet is He man, with no disguise about it, but His manhood is not the whole of Jesus. That 'more' in Him creates our judgment, and establishes our hope. He makes us face God in Him, a task beyond a man. 'We must not make our manhood the standard by which to measure that of our Lord; rather, we must attempt to measure our approximation to the standard of true manhood by reference to His.' An important Christological

canon.

b) He was a Jew.

The prophets of Israel had ethical qualities in their thought and ideal which constituted such universality of judgment that, despite racial and characteristic outlook, their contribution to the life of man is one that can hardly be assessed, still less be repaid. The world is indebted for all time to the despised Jew. Yet how the world, ancient and modern, has dealt with that race ! Granted that he has not always, perhaps rarely, approximated to his ideal - has any race ever done so in any appreciable measure? - nevertheless, it seems incredible that Jewish misdemeanour should ever obliterate the memory of that unresolved debt. Only God can forgive, if ever, the ageless treatment meted out to His ancient people.

Now Jesus was unmistakably Jew. He accepted not a little of the tradition of His fathers. He assumed the Messianic position and burden to such an extent that it is amazing, in one sense, that He is universally the measure of man as man, no matter the race and culture confronting Him in those countries within which He comes to be known. He comes to each as a stranger, a foreigner, an alien, an outsider, yet He so shares human nature, and completes it, as to transcend its particularities, that at last the keenest nationalist finds in Him a patriotism that eclipses his own, despite the fact that He is not one native born. There is thus no occidental so western as Jesus, no oriental so eastern as He. Yet Jesus remained so much a Jew that many who vehemently oppose the Christian interpretation thrill with pride

when they have cause to remember that this crucified Jesus of Nazareth was one of their own race.

To conjecture what would or would not have happened, had such and such a thing taken place, is often to waste time and thought to no effective purpose. Yet we may well be thankful that when in the providence of God His Son came, 'born of a woman', that race was chosen as the place and means of His birth. It was a strangely gifted race to which He came, a race dowered with the greatest prophetic genius, a race driven to a closer search after God than any other on the face of the earth. No race as the Jews had known such a discipline as they had experienced. God simply had burnt out from among them the idolatries that had sapped the spiritual genius of other races. No other race had ever known such a deep hunger for God; none had ever come into the discovery or revelation of His ultimate sovereignty; none has submitted to the discipline of His truth as had the Jew. No poet or dramatist or prophet has ever voiced the sublimity and pathos of that lone quest for the Divine as the sons of Israel have. Only Jesus has matched the quality of that hunger in the finality of the satisfaction He has given in Himself.

As a Jew Jesus entered fully into the monotheistic inheritance of His people which as a contribution to life has dwarfed the finest gift of Greece. At times Greece and Palestine confront each other for the soul of the world, and it is not Palestine which has to be denied, but Greece. Now in no

other nation could Jesus have found waiting for Him just that same inherent gift. In the disciplined past of His fathers, however, He felt the pressure of the One God; in approval He re-lived their long painful quest for the Holy One; their venture of obedience as age after age they sought to get right with God, He made His own. In vision He saw their faith hammered out on the anvils of conquering, God Himself being the final wielder of that 'hammer'.

Jesus marked the growing prophetic discovery of the unqualified holiness of God, that 'jealousy' of Yahweh which characterised their life and writing. Wheeler Robinson thinks of such travail as tantamount to a racial crucifixion. (12) Against the very qualified divinity of Mount Olympus, how amazingly that white flame in Israel shines out. Urquhart has shown clearly that pantheism, whether of India or Greece, inevitably spells out ethical indifference with a sequent weakening of the moral demand, resulting in a lack of room and power for full and effective personality. (13) No race or life rises higher than its gods.

Unlike Greece and India (both are here closely akin) Jesus had never to break away from the tradition of the greatest prophets of His race, though He transcended their teaching, for neither law nor prophet is the measure of the Son. At the same time, He was particularly at home within the deepest thought. The law of Sinai and the Sermon on the Mount only differ in the greater inner and outer range of the latter-the

same holiness is in both. A Sadhu Sundar Singh, almost to the breaking of his own heart and that of his home, must step outside the main drift of his people's faith; but not so Jesus the Jew. He had only to strip away the accretions of later traditions, to change an emphasis here and there, to reveal the deeper prophetic implications. (14) Jesus never stressed the infallibility of Moses or of the prophets, but their God was His Father, the difference being that the vision of the Son was keener and more authoritative than that of His servants the prophets. Jesus was no stranger to the true Israel of God; He was at home, on native heath, though He came to save at ultimate cost. The tragedy was that the majority had journeyed in the 'far country' of a false nationalism and its pride.

Further, the classical races had their 'Golden Age' in their distant past, not as a dream luring them on to wondrous fulfilment. They all looked back wistfully at a lost splendour which had 'faded into the common day' and would never return. Not so the Jew. However much our modern age may decry their apocalypticism - and 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread' - it had a wonderful futurity at its heart. It created history, and awakened the historical mind. Their persecutions but fed the flame of its hope. Their martyrs died in the faith that Yahweh would bring to an end world tyranny and its evil. Out of the faith in one all-righteous God there sprang the moving belief that at last He would rule the world. Apocalyptic therefore was



the written expression of such a vision. The tonic of it even moves and masters our own soul. Blame the Jew as one may care, it is doubtful whether there has been any cosmic dream of greater pith and worth than this one. Jesus gave to it His whole heart, and where He has given Himself, we lesser folk need have no fear in according our own appreciation.

Jesus accepted it as a reality which must increasingly dominate the world of mind and heart. He purged it first in His own mind; He pruned it of every unworthy excrescence; He set His face against its local and nationalistic forms; but He retained the fire and glory of it within His own soul, and gave it again to the world through His disciples, His teaching, and His cross. In one sense, Jesus died that that 'hope' might not perish from the heart of the spiritual world.

Jesus the Jew, therefore, was one of His race in this forward looking hope, and only in such a race could He have found it waiting for Him. That belief meant for the Jew, and was accepted by Jesus, that the Holy God had a definite and unswervable purpose in history. However the nations might revolt against it, God would bring them back to it, or else be compelled to dig their national grave. How awesome is Nahum; 'Behold I am against thee, -----I will make thy grave for thou art vile.' Whatever of racial intolerance we may have to mark in this word, yet it is a truth which history has authenticated again and again. 'There is a power not ourselves making for righteousness.' From seer and prophet and historian

Jesus inherited such a truth. God had always dealt with His people. He had sent them into exile and had drawn them back again. Now what He was about to do, would transcend the whole of that dramatic past. Sin and wrong and tyranny are doomed since God is God. How profoundly different is all this from the mythology of Greece and Rome. When one remembers, e.g. the story of Ate bursting in upon the gods at Olympus, with the resulting drama of Helen and Troy and the dire waste of honour and life, how startling the contrast. It is true that there is a nobler word in the more ethical writers, but the clear note that morality and religion are linked together by the holy sovereign will of God is never so manifest as in Israel. It would therefore have been stark wonder had Jesus sprung from Greece. Humanly speaking, it could never have happened. And it is just here, at this point of fundamental divergence, that Gore refuses to admit that Christianity owes any real debt to the mystery religions. (I5) What Jesus did was to thrust Himself, as its incarnate crown and utmost fulfilment, within this great national purpose, and to declare that its furthest point of destiny was grounded in Himself. His people since have endorsed in their faith and devotion His word and deed. Apart from such an inheritance 'He could not have offered His revelation.' (I6) From such a beginning His goal stood out clear from the first. From no other race could He have received at birth such an ethical inheritance. God called His Son from the only race that could make such a contribution. They had learned it under His discipline, in travail of soul.

.c)The Catholicity of the Man.

Jesus, though a man and a worker and a Jew, reveals in Himself whatever is essential to man as man, no matter race or clime. Manhood in Him stands out minus defect or flaw or lack. When one considers where and how Jesus was born, the narrow ways within which He lived, and the shame that encircled Him in death, it is astounding. There is a universality in His manhood within which men of all races may individually find their peculiar niche as those at home, each man in his native character. He fulfils also the deepest inspirations of womanhood the wide world over. Jesus has given woman both her person and her liberty. This is an imperious assumption, one of the most arresting, in the Gospels. It is not the summation of an elaborate argument; it is given as one voices an intuition, or an axiom, or a vision of God's reality. The Gospels seem implicitly to say that in Jesus humanity has been fused as never before, and in no one else. One thing only is markedly absent - man's sin. Other than this, and in all essentials, Jesus is truly man, man as God must have purposed Him to be, as He would both own and have him: man offering himself as the perfect instrument for His eternal purpose.

Jesus also gathers up within Himself the profoundest feelings and aspirations of all time. It is Jesus who gives back humanity to itself and its God, now freed from its alien tyranny and sinful inability. Just as Jesus gathers up the disparate excellencies of the various races, so He

recalls man from the tyranny of his functions. Men are often as split up individually in their functions as they are in their races. Often a man seems hardly more than his daily task. A man becomes so engrossed in his daily work for 'the bread that perisheth' that when with ageing years he has to drop this task there seems to be a collapse at the centre. It means that there has been no attachment to a higher reality. Jesus would have men learn through Him that a carpenter or a broker or a politician is amazingly more than his job. His searching word, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you', means more than a lesson how to live; it also opens up an attitude and a faith whereby a man may re-capture his lost heart and his lost capacity for fine and lofty living. From success, as well as from sorrow, Jesus recalls man to his God.

Hence it is, that where most religious and philosophic thinkers have been buried beneath their abstractions in their effort to achieve catholicity, there Jesus the Man shook off abstraction by revealing life catholic in Himself, as He Himself lived, as all men through Him may attempt to live. His was never the catholicity that sloughs off the particular in order to show the general principle. The name they gave Him, as illumining every bit of God's cosmos, 'the Light of the World', reveals the all-embracing love and light by which men may live through Him. 'He not only enters into our nature, He enters into our experience.' This is the reason why no

one was so much at home within human life as Jesus was. He seemed to touch life at every angle, and He left every one transformed. Contrasts which in others would be unresolvable and antagonistic, merged together to form the unique picture of Jesus the Man. He was at one and the same time more mystical than the perfect mystic, yet no one was so concrete as He. His dreams of the kingdom of God were far beyond those of any other, yet He was practicality itself. On the highway or in the busy street, en route to the Synagogue or by the sea-shore, at a wedding or at a funeral, with people or alone with God, whenever we meet Him He is perfectly at home in that situation. All of which is a call to us. We meet our potentially deeper redeemed nature, whenever we encounter Jesus.

d) Jesus summarises therefore within Himself every phase of our manifold nature, though not its sin and tragedy.

As we observe the candid and fearless range of His mind, He intrigues us to adventure out to know the world of God and life intellectually as He knew and loved it. He would have us bring to bear upon all reality the full quality of an eager mind, searching out the deep things of God. Christ never put a premium upon an ignorant or sluggish mind. God made His creature a thinker, and Jesus would have him enter fully into such a great inheritance.

He would have us also vibrate ethically to the great moral note of the holiness of God as revealed in both

Testaments, and as Nature teaches throughout her discipline. Jesus instinctively concerned Himself with ethical decisions, both as touching God and man. Nothing in His thought was so important as to get right with God. Only thus can a man be right with his own complex nature, with that of others, and with the world in which all live, and with the unborn future.

It is also clear that we are to develop emotionally an increasing sensitiveness to the varied message of God and life and Nature. Thus one is saved from a harsh lovelessness which has often been the bane of religion. On the other hand, emotion without ethical quality is as a ~~quagmire~~ in which there is no standing. When charged ethically, however, it is the finest material of the spirit for kingdom building. Hence, His own duality of life - love for God cohering with love for man. It is one love, harmonised in manifold detail, thus the absence from His life of the modern 'complexes' so frequently disastrous today. Jesus was unified in God. He never permitted any interest to interfere with His communion with the Father. The world never spoiled Jesus for heaven; yet He loved both.

Jesus would also have the life of His people spiritually transformed and transfigured as His had been. By perennial surrender to the unceasing call of God, through the study of the Scriptures and of Nature and life, Jesus hallowed all His days and ways. There are hints of fierce temptations through which He passed unscathed and victorious which have flung men off their balance all through the ages. What was His

secret? He was true at greatest cost to God and life and duty, true to home and market and temple, true to the last. Watson's words have both beauty as well as truth: 'One Son left no regret; One Son fulfilled every hope; One Son made a Galilean cottage as our Father's Home.'

e) He has shared our need and privilege of obedience to God. There is a noble word in Hebrews, 'He learned obedience by the things He suffered'. Such a clear word affirms that He brought a mind, an affection, and a will to bear upon this ambiguous life. By the validity of the Incarnation - 'He became flesh' - He was compelled by the logic of the situation to seek an ethical path of strain and stress and venture. He must seek for God, as all men must. Yet how strongly contrasted with our wilfulness and rebellion, our failure and darkness is He in His perfection of attainment. Obedience is the secret.

There was the obedience of the Hidden Years: the glory of later Ministry, with all its influence on the after centuries, must not be permitted to blur the reality of the thirty years that lay behind the three. Here in the silent years we must infer the dawning of worship, love, devotion, work, with suffering of varying strands, and responsibility, all increasingly accepted as they were growingly experienced.

There was the responsive waiting in Nazareth until the reports of John's preparatory ministry of repentance and baptism chimed within His soul with a new awareness that the Father's destined hour for His Son had struck. Jesus obeyed.

No one seems able to draw aside that veil; the secret of those years abides with Jesus still. This much we may rightly assume, that all He has since been to men and women of every race, that He was in Himself within and without the home at Nazareth. The flawless three years must have had a flawless thirty at their heart. Paul (cf. Phil. ii. 9) suggests that the cross made a crucial difference - 'Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name'. The obedience of Calvary's hill, nevertheless, was only deeper because of the inbreaking of a greater dimensional hour than that of village life; for Him both situations demanded one thing, viz. a heart set staunchly on the fulfilment of God's will. The shadows of sin that deepened into abyssmal darkneses on that cross must have flung their chill shadow upon His heart in the village carpenter's shop, as He toiled there at the bidding of those who sought His perfect work. It was the disclosed menace, in varied forms, against God in the lives of those about Him, the complement of which He did not experience within Himself. Sin was excommunicated from His inner life. 'Get thee hence, Satan' and 'the Prince of this world hath nothing in me' are but expressions later of what He had done at home. They ran back as far as the earliest hour when sin made its first conscious bid for His soul, and failed early as it failed late. He so loved and willed to live within God that He refused to give that other dark presence so much as a breathing space within His will. He

was alone ,save for the Father. That divergence of soul from Jesus on the part of priest and scribe and Levite which incurred the most biting yet holy invective on the page of literary history ,may possibly have had its origin here in the simple village when first He noticed how a man engaged in holy things could be careful in public action, yet unholy and selfish in heart. The 'Good Samaritan' parable may have drawn one or more of its characters from this little mountain village where the faintest whisper re-echoed as in a whispering gallery. Jesus heard, and was hurt as ^{only} He could be. The little home, the tiny synagogue, the small groups of social friends, how much such reveal the inner ways of the unguarded heart. What we instinctively reveal, we truly are. Jesus, however, with His gracious honour, itself a lesson in the courtesy of heaven to the worldly heart, never breathed into alien ears the sorrow and tragedy of His village days: we only hear the fairest, as given in the most exquisite parables the soul has ever heard. Yet He took God's side even against the dearest; He loved them all, but the honour of heaven came first. That is the reason why He was always so true. He obeyed, but never betrayed. The mariner never goes astray as long as he steers by the stars.

ii) What was the cost of that obedience? None can fully tell. 'He learned obedience --- He suffered'. How much of cost lies folded up in that inspired, revealing phrase. His obedience was a perennial response of the will intent on God, a steady setting of His entire personality to carry forward God's

purpose. Sinlessness must always cost terribly in such a world as this, and such suffering will be woven into the texture of the daily life. It was here, additionally, that Jesus may have been driven to prayer..

That quality of obedience, the positive expression of His sinlessness, was an 'energia' of His responsive spirit: it must not be thought of as a 'dunamis' of His life. Aristotle taught the ethical world that 'virtue' must be seen as an 'energia' rather than a 'dunamis', as an active, virile force going out to meet and conquer the stubborn demands of life, rather than an inherent quality that keeps itself immune from defilement. Seeley similarly urged that no virtue is safe that is not passionate. Jesus said, 'I do always those things that please Him'. 'I do ---: it sums up the joy of action, a phase of the joy of the Father's heart, and which goes on to transform this sin-defiant world. That doing of Jesus was of the creative order. On the debris of broken wills and soiled lives, He builds the inevitable kingdom of God. But its cost !

iii. The Resultant Power.

Within that sphere of obedience, Jesus drew the ever expanding sense of enabling power. One never strikes an hour in Jesus' life when He could not do that upon which He had set His heart. It is linked with the obedience in baptism, and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the bank of the Jordan; it is marked after the Wilderness Temptation; miracle and prayer are linked together; in the Garden cost and power are

expressed in 'sweat as of blood' ; on the Cross He wills Himself through deep darkness to light, and in the act of redeeming the world saves a broken life hanging at His side. His power of self-committal, 'into Thy hands', is of the same order, a perfection of self-offering.

The principle lies clear: on the way of God's will for Him He always sought and met the Father. Kingsley once said that Jesus never went out into nature except to meet God. As a result, He never missed the 'Burning Bush' of revelation, as Elizabeth Barrett Browning has shown the lot of others to be. We are often so powerless: our dream so rarely becomes our deed. Frequently we cut the sod of some noble ambition for God and life, but the house of achievement rarely lifts its roof to the skies. Were we to stand, however, just where He stood, and go forward intent on the will as He went, with selfhood held in trust for Godhood, then we too would know what power for conquest Jesus has opened up within human life. 'Ye have not, because ye ask not', i.e. as Jesus asked. 'Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink?' 'We are able.' 'Ye shall.'

It is all as clear as noonday - He never owned Himself: He belonged wholly to God. What a secret and a paradox it is !

f) His poise amid growing tumult may be seen as another aspect of His sinless power.

That poise and harmony are discerned when we see how independent He was of much that usually makes up the average life, ancient or modern. He stood out and aloof from almost every ambition that sways men. Evil could neither buy nor

cajole Him, nor thrust Him into a situation contrary to His will and purpose. This is a marked feature in all the Gospels, wherever you meet Him in their pages. The same quality of independent action, the same creative force, is precisely what you see in the brusque Mark, as in the Fourth Gospel where the highest possible predicates are applied to His Person. It is the same Jesus. He reveals a poise and a harmony which bespeak a centre without anarchy. F.H. Bradley, profound metaphysician and logician, gives an indirect illustration of this quality: 'Inference', he says, 'rests upon the assumption that, if the ideal content be the same, then its differences will be but the radii of one centre. In other words, if a quality is the same, what is true of it in one content is true of it in another.' (18) How it illumines the Christ: meet Him on any road of life, and He is no stranger to you on any other.

'In that look feel heaven, earth, men, and angels
Nearer grow through Him.'

The interdependence of Jesus is equally real. No one ever sought friendship as fully as Jesus did. His deepest wounds are summed up in that given by Judas: 'Betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?' Here the greatest men have all given hostages to fortune. 'Et tu, Brute?' Yet Jesus never permitted the closest friendship to unbalance His unique poise in God. His word to Peter at the close of that epochal hour at Caesarea Philippi reveals how He valued the Divine within the social attachment. His ethical distance from men's ambitions

was often comparable to that of a final gulf.

It all directs attention to the secret of His whole life; He was dependent only on God. 'I and the Father are one', even were it critically proved that Jesus actually never spoke the word, would be predicated as a natural inference of His will. One can never mark even a shadow between the soul of Jesus and the Father. If such existed, the Gospels have no record of it.

g) Whenever we meet Jesus we meet a Seeker, a Finder, a Witnesser, and at last a Sufferer.

A Seeker: His word to men and women that they are to 'ask, seek, and knock', is but a revelation of His habitual trend. All else is to be seen as contributory and of secondary value. A variant of the classic passage, 'Seek the big things and the little shall be added unto you', is of similar nature. Jesus correlates seeking and finding. He declares that God welcomes the spirit that seeks until it finds. For man's courage on that mystic road, Jesus reveals that God is not so far off as a handbreadth, and only in that measure to insure through relative independence man's growth and attainment.

A Finder: Against every phase of pessimism, Jesus' experience of God is an optimism that transforms 'fate' into 'faith'. Over against doubt and despair, Jesus stands as incarnate promise and fulfilment. The simplicity of what He has known God to be, but hides the range and depth of such final certitude. No one now is more surely known and loved.

than God the Father. It is the attainable supremacy of life.

His Witness carries the same quality, and it is witness at first hand. Jesus would never have the soul try to live upon mere secondhand information concerning God. 'We speak that we do know'. Where in the past the greatest thinkers have faltered, and some at last have halted engirt by the mist of mere conjecture, Jesus moves as one utterly sure of God and His will and purpose of mercy and goodness. A creative glory, therefore, is about His message, and His witness wakes the deepest and most reverent moods of men.

Jesus helps us to see how natural it is for the human spirit to trust in God - a contribution, even from the angle of His humanity, impossible to estimate. It carries, as it suggests, the reverence of His heart. He spoke of God with an intimacy which hinted at the warmth of central fires. He never bartered reverence for fellowship with men. God first. He wore no shoes that had to be taken off before the sudden emergence of 'the Burning Bush'. He shared that holiness. 'The unfathomableness of Jesus', as the dying Lavater saw, belonged to His very nature.

Thus He became the Sufferer.

We feel it at His cross, though how far back it runs no one can say. The finest thought is driven to postulate the ageless sorrow of God over His estranged world. The question has always to be faced candidly:- How far can we go back with Jesus, there to find that He does not compel us to go further still? That being so, we must deduce as inevitable inference

that in such a world as ours suffering must be the crucial lot of such an one as Jesus. The balance of truth in this world is often tilted by the bias of passion and prejudice. Money and position often count more for homage than truth and honour. Personality is often more valued than personalty. In many lives there is more of the tendency to flout God than to fear Him. It was destined therefore that Jesus suffer. He cut too deeply and frequently into life; He was so little respectful of its pomposities and follies and camouflage; He pilloried its sin and lust and cruelty, and left all such exposed to their naked heart. Even a sated wordling shivers and shudders when chilly winds blow upon his uncovered shame. There is then no hatred such as his against the man so doing. Jesus compelled the life of His day to stand bared before august tribunals, and they would not have it. They gave Him to the cross! Is it an outrage to feel that not a few of our modern principles would send Him there again if He returned and did the same?

His suffering was summed up in a cross of utter shame. Yet the unique quality of His influence has lifted that shame to the position of an ideal beyond all other. There is none with a tithe of its significance, none with a fraction of its power; there is no might as its right; there is no mercy and redemption as its shadow. Jesus is crowned in His cross, and it is also the crown of millions of redeemed lives. These have the last word to say concerning Jesus. They say that to live in that Man is to become human as by no other means, and to face a future profounder than any other hope or dream.

II. WHEREIN HE TRANSCENDS US.

The Church has rightly anchored her faith in the validity of the historical presentation of Jesus of Nazareth, though she has refused to circumscribe Him within the limits of the purely historical. There have been coteries which would have dispensed with the severely historical in order, as their members thought, to simplify faith. In the end, however, it has tended more to evaporate faith than to substantiate it.

The Church has formulated her dogmas through her experience of His grace, and such experience has been that of One transcendent both in His nature and work. In codified theology she pronounces Him Lord, because that supreme title expresses What He has been to her life. It is on this plane that the Fourth Gospel is understood. 'There can be no greater mistake', says G.B. Stevens, 'than to regard our author's Christology as a product of abstract speculation.' (19)

The most pertinent fact in the history of the Church is that since His advent, upon the axis of His own personality and redeeming work, He has swung the whole universe of thought and life round to the profoundest possible conception of God, of nature, of man, and of destiny. He has given a new birth to ethics; philanthropy has realised a passion for service unknown in measure and quality prior to His coming; and personality has been vastly enriched.

Further, He is still timelessly operative in manifold experience. No one is so well known throughout the world today

as is Jesus. More modern languages enshrine His name in the literature of thought and worship and ideal than that of any other.

This is but the extension of the main emphasis found in the New Testament, with its climax in the Fourth Gospel. That emphasis is not on the faith of Jesus, as that of a man uniquely endowed so as to apprehend God, thus affording other men an example of faith; but on the developing faith of the disciples in Jesus, as One supreme over all, from whom the highest predicates of thought and worship simply cannot be withheld.

That faith at first created the Church; that same faith still keeps the Church dynamic. Apart from such daring faith in His unique transcendence - infinitely beyond the loftiest Humanism - it is hard to see how the Church could have survived the seeming tragedy of the Cross, and the persecutions that followed; still less, how she could have stood up to the dead drift of inertia and sin and death ever since.

The present phase of our task in this thesis is to mark, as best we can, how such transcendence manifested itself historically to the early disciples; and how it still wins the Christian heart.

A. He transcends us in His power.

a) His power over the forces of nature.

So far as it can be seen, miracle cannot be wiped out of the New Testament and yet leave a consistent portrait of Christ and His work. New Testament miracle really means,

not that He upset the forces of nature, and wrought upon them from outside the domain of law, but rather that He stood within that domain, with a deeper insight into their nature than was possible to others, and with unique ability to release forces not at their command. Within those deeper dimensions which were native to His personality, what He willed to do He was able to perform. Unless we break down the validity of the New Testament report, that must be granted.

Whether miracles are possible or otherwise, must be subordinated to the credibility of the report of those witnesses, as they record what He did, and of what order of being they found Him to be. In the final issue, it will all turn upon the conception formed of His Person, as determined by their experienced of His grace.

It is sometimes customary to write them down as naïvely credulous, and to infer that their witness has not the credibility and validity of today's scientific order. Two things, however, stand out clearly: First, on the face of all history, both B.C. and A.D., a second Jesus has not appeared; and second, the effect He has wrought on the face of life, and which growingly persists, is without a parallel. Great has been the power of world conquerors who have waded to their thrones in blood, yet no one of them, ancient or modern, has ever exhibited a fraction of His power. The credibility of His witnesses may be denied, nevertheless the world of thought and science has yet to account for Him.

Since the whole question of miracle is considered in a later chapter, this brief reference may suffice here.

b) His power over the soul of man.

It is practically axiomatic that no one person in history has ever exercised such persistent sway over the human soul as Jesus has. There have been periods of ebb-tide when His influence has receded from some shores of life, but on the whole faith in Him has grown steadily, until today it is without parallel, and holds potentially the ethical and spiritual future of the world. 'The Church conquered the world', T.R. Glover considers, 'because it appealed to a great race on its highest levels.' (20) Some of the factors in that conquest may now be mentioned.

1) Jesus encountered and illumined the world's darkness.

This darkness was manifold. The soul felt itself begirt with mystery on all sides. Guilt was a problem to the thoughtful and sensitive heart. Fear was world-wide and almost as varied as the individual. The future could be hardly better sketched than in the figure of the Egyptian Sphinx - cold staring eyes, motionless lips, and chilly heart; an enigma, passionless and inert. The gods were uncertain, or objects of dread. The grave was deep; the after-silence profound and impenetrable. Love and hope were frail.

Now in whatever land His Gospel was borne by His disciples, and where His presence was experienced through faith, Jesus was found fronting and answering these poignant needs. No matter the degradation or the culture of the people, no matter the grossness of the darkness encountered or the menace of unspeakable fears, Jesus simply vindicated Himself as Love, Light, and

Redemptive Power.

The modern parallel to the ethical darkness of Greece and Rome is met today in all animistic races, as e.g. among the Outcastes of India, those millions that live on the outskirts of city and village. Demon worship is common, and it carries the entail of ghastly fear. As in the ancient days, so now Jesus bids the demons depart, and the delivered heart enters into a strange peace. 'Sāhib, my burden is gone', is a typical instance. 'To the stranger from the West', says T.R. Glover, 'with his modern science they are nothing. To the ancient world (as now in India) they are more real than the women and the men in the streets.' The conquest, he thinks, 'was achieved --- by the New Testament principle of concentrating emphasis on Jesus Christ.' (21)

ii) Jesus answered the world's longing for God.

Jesus has more seriously fronted the human soul as the embodied revelation of the Divine than any other religious leader of history, not excluding the Jewish prophet. He has made real to man that in Him the transcendent and holy God stands revealed. Such is unbearable burden for one purely human; but Jesus easily sustains such pressure. Were we not so familiar with the thought, it would be of staggering significance.

the glory of the infinite God is not in any sense diminished. At the same time, no essential element of humanity is negated. As a result, faith sees in Jesus One who has lifted humanity itself to the throne of God.

In manifesting God in terms of His own human life, Jesus

has added a new tenderness to God's holiness, and to that holy Self capacity of perfect sacrifice. Love is now declared to be the Alpha and Omega of the Divine nature. 'It is only in Jesus', says T.R.Glover, 'that the love of God (in the New Testament sense) is tenable at all. It is evanescent apart from Jesus; it rests on the assurance of His words, His work, His personality.' (22)

Jesus therefore is the final interpreter of God, and He makes that interpretation conditional on faith in His Person, hence the difference^{en} in so many biographies of Jesus. The purely historic fail to give us that amplitude and sublimity of His nature and work which have conquered the spiritual heart of the world. Not so the Evangelists. They are at home in that world of deeper dimensions. They tell us that they entered it through faith in Him. It was the secret of the urge which led them to write as they did. They had discovered that Jesus was the 'Ens Realissimum', the last reality of God's universe. It was not their creation, but their discovery through contact with Him. He had become the grace of God to their need and life. Before ever they wrote or thought out one syllable, Jesus had revealed God to them. 'The personality of Christ is so unique', Gore considers, 'that nothing can account for it but the belief that in the process of history ---- the Absolute once for all manifested itself under the conditions of time. Here is something in history which is supra-historical - towards which and from which all history, as far as it is religious history, must move and in which it must have its centre.' (23)

iii) He awoke the world to a condemnation of sin as a prelude to a much deeper work, viz. redeeming the race from its tragedy.

He did so through His own incomparable sinlessness, that is, through positive and operative holiness. The Hebrew prophets had made it impossible for any one who knew their writings to acknowledge God as other than utterly holy. Such holiness implies moral transcendence beyond anything the sinful mind of man can conjecture.

The Christian faith is founded on the fact that the holy and transcendent God had become incarnate in Jesus the Christ. It was of no a priori order, but the product, or, shall we say, the precipitate of His disciples as they marked His utter deviation from them as touching sinnerhood. 'In Him was no sin.' Our abstract word, sinlessness, is a poor description of that quality in Him which woke a sleeping world to such sensitiveness of conscience toward sin that since His day there has been no other criterion comparable. Yet the disciples met Him as a man. It came to them as an atmosphere and a personal influence at first; it became integral with their thought of Him; their own lives seemed more stained in comparison than in the earlier careless days; and they heard Him forgive the sin of the soul as the first charge on His soul before He dealt with any malady of the body. At last they knew the unparalleled truth that sin had no share in His nature. Neither in that day nor in this, has that fact been validly overthrown, though it has been challenged, as, e.g. Celsus in the ancient day and Strauss in the modern.

In that quality of life, which neither they nor others have shared, they marked a moral transcendence beyond all else. It is the closest thing to God on earth. The holiness which the prophet felt to be in God, and which he knew must be an element in the coming Kingdom of God, they experienced in the 'Friend of Sinners', their Master. The noblest prophets would have been astounded at the Divine quality of Jesus' unmarred life, as, e.g. the Baptist. ^{says Denny,} 'When we consider His knowledge of the human heart', and how His words are able to wake the sleeping conscience and make it tell over to us all things that ever we did ----- we feel how absolutely alone Christ stands in the world, and by how deep - and from our side how impassable - a gulf He is separated as sinless from all men.' (24)

That quality of His life, therefore, was as a light beating upon and laying bare their inner life, whether they would or not. The assumption at the back of their word is that He knew such as only God ~~knows~~, the supreme searcher of hearts, knows, before whom no thought is hid. But the disciples never discovered traces of healed scars in Jesus. They learned nothing in Him of that which so often lays waste our best and deepest life, which darkens the mind and clouds the counsel, and lays up for us years of poignant remorse. A Mohammed, the later enemy of the Church, has to confess personal sinnerhood, but he terms Jesus 'the sinless One'.

Edward Caird used to say that philosophy meant thinking things together. What the Church has done, unconsciously at times, is to carry that principle out respecting Jesus. She has had to point out that alone of men Jesus shares the holiness of God

which until He came had only been a fleeting glimpse in pagan minds, a pain and a judgment in the prophetic heart because of personal and national sinnerhood, at times a despair, as Paul in his autobiographical note in Romans shows - 'O wretched man that I am ! '

But here is the sheer grace of it - it was but the prelude to His greater work, that of redeeming the race and the individual to new life in God. Jesus would never have thrust the loneliness of this ethical severity upon the human heart merely for its own sake. Torture is the last thing we can think of in connection with Jesus, and physical agony is preferable to spiritual. It came indirectly as a challenge, directly as redemption. He searched their hearts, not to condemn - that was secondary - but to redeem. Jesus would never have added one extra throb of pain to man. He has sought to lessen man's woe throughout the centuries. Yet He has increased our ethical suffering to a degree of almost unbearable agony, though only to become our Redeemer, and because He must condemn if He would validly save.

It was this mingled pain and promise which the early Christian flung out over the ancient world. 'Something had changed them', says T.R. Glover. 'As to what that was the Christian made no secret. His Master asked of him, quite simply and directly, the utmost of morality, not to the standard of Socrates or any lesser figure of tradition, but to the standard of God Himself, measured by no Homeric scale, but the scale of Jesus. -- What a call in a world of compromise and lost nerve. --- Ancient morality gave out; based too much on tradition, it was beset by fear, it

compromised and declined. The Christian pitched his ideals "according to Christ", would have no compromise with evil, fought and overcame sin - not in his own strength, but by faith in Christ.' (25)

iv. Jesus transcends the race as its Redeemer.

Apart from Him is there any other? The world knows none. He alone has become the power of cosmic and individual redemption. It may not accept Him on His terms of surrender, but even in the negativeness of having none at all, it implicitly suggests His extraordinary greatness. He brings the wider world of God within the soul, and ushers him into a new standing before Him. The result is a new quality of life and hope. 'Jesus was the first', says Borchert, 'to teach us that the soul of every poor wretch, every rascal and blockhead should have the same metaphysical value as that of Michael Angelo or Beethoven.' (26)

Although all this is gathered up supremely in His cross, yet the light that streamed from it lit up His ministry as of saving worth. Jesus all along was the Incarnate Redeemer and Redemption was His native work. His death but crystallized every redeeming factor in His life, and crowned the work of reconciling estranged man^{to} his God. 'His whole person', says Forsyth, 'was expiatory in its ultimate function and supreme work. It was on this ground that He forgave during His life. Each miracle cost and was preceded by a small passion. --- All His sufferings were death in advance, deaths manifold, chastisements of sin, and in their nature expiatory. He was inwardly in death before He died the outward death.' (27)

If ever transcendence stood out clearly, it is just here, in seeing that Christ offered an atonement of cosmic worth and order, applicable also to the individual. If experimentally we can view such work, and know on the basis of our own reconciliation with God that all men are potentially reconciled, then from the Reconciler we can bar no category of preeminence available and expressible within man's redeemed mind. 'There can be no middle term between the Creator and the creature', says Gore. 'There can be no demi-God. --- If by union with Jesus Christ we are united to God, then He must have come personally from beyond the fathomless depth which in idea separates the one creative nature from the creature. He must belong essentially to the one divine being. He must be of one substance with the Father. This is the verdict against Arius.' (28)

Here on the basic ground of incomparable redemption, every doxology of the Church has known its initial inspiration - 'Unto Him that loved us and loosed us from our sins, unto Him be the glory! ' This sense of mighty redemption at infinite cost opened the blind eyes of the ancient world to the wonder regnant in Christ, as it does to this present day.

Here also has been the birth place of all the great Christological conceptions, doxology codified in theology. They were all begotten in experience and matured in glowing and growing faith, but even such could only express a tithe of what He had been to them. The experiences of His grace transcended

the noblest terms their grateful minds could frame. In redemptive moments men had found that they had been delivered from the tragedy of their disordered and divided selves, had been re-united in finer personality, had been brought into that deeper dimensional realm so native to His own life. The genesis of every theory of the Atonement must be found here, since the throbbing experiences of the heart must find expression in the newly awakened mind. 'It is the doctrine of the atonement,' Denny points out, 'which secures for Christ His place in the Gospel, which makes it inevitable that we should have a Christology or a doctrine of His Person.--- We are His debtors and it is a real debt, a debt infinite, never to be forgotten, never to be discharged. ---The atonement always seems to say again, Consider how great this Man was.' (29)

B. He transcends us in His own Nature.

In the Synoptists we notice what has been termed the psychological development of Jesus, leading on to the awareness of unique factors in His selfhood. In the Fourth Gospel this seems out of the question. From the outset, He is fully aware of personal uniqueness. The Baptist, also, has entered somewhat into the 'mystery' of His Person. Here we have the antinomy with which New Testament theology has striven since scientific criticism came into existence.

What has been assumed for years by scientific theology is that during the period of His ministry Jesus grew into self-realization, and that this is borne out by a judicious study of

the Synoptists. The absence of this from the Fourth Gospel, it is thought, must denote that this Gospel is the result of later reflection, and which removes it from that historical plane on which the Synoptists are found. Further, it is a reading into the life of Jesus of transcendent factors which are not strictly native to Him, but are the result of idealizing processes which culminated in worship being paid to Him. Hence the 'Back to Christ' movement.

The fresh work, however, of the Form Criticism School of post-war Germany has rendered this position, if not untenable, at least open to severe criticism. These scholars hold as doubtful the Twin-Hypothesis Theory, and are also of the opinion that on the basis of the evidence which the Gospels supply, it is impossible to construct validly a psychological career of Jesus. All such presentations are to be held as suspect. At best, all that we have is a series of 'snap-shots' of Jesus held within an arbitrary framework. This is to be held as pertinent to all the Gospels, the Fourth included.

This is a severe re-action from the earlier position which made possible the psychological biographies of Jesus. That the Christian scholar will not be content with the scepticism of this school has been shown by not a little competent criticism already levelled against it. The school however has served a very useful purpose by rendering untenable the older theory of a great gulf between the Synoptists and the Fourth Gospel. All the Gospels are seen to have been created by the faith of the

community, and thus they are definitely linked with each other. They together reveal the Christ as He has revealed Himself to His Church.

(a) The argument to be submitted in these pages is that He progressively unveiled Himself to the disciples, rather than grew into self-consciousness before them. When the disciples met Jesus, they met One who was aware of His own unique selfhood and destiny. Slowly, as they were able to bear its truth, He revealed the 'mystery' of His Person. They grew in Him; He did not grow into conscious selfhood before them. Whatever development, therefore, the Gospels may present, it is of this order, viz. that of self-disclosure on the part of One supremely sure of Himself.

This is not an easy position to assume, and it has been only taken after prolonged and costly years of thought, and with not a little of hesitation. It has been hammered out on the twin anvils of dire personal need and close and fresh study of the original records.

The main reason undergirding this position is that it seems best to accord with both Synoptist and Johannine factors, together with Church experience since they were written. It is on the long line of the Church's faith that Jesus must be explicated. At least, as far back as the Jordan, and presumably further back, Jesus' surrender marked the deepest self-consciousness of the Son to the call of the Father. The Wilderness Temptation suggests the fore-shadowing of the principle of the Cross as it lay potentially within the choice He had made of 'the narrow way'

of the Father's will. The repeated references to the Cross after the confession at Caesarea Philippi - which confession Jesus drew out from Peter - bespeak an intimacy with its meaning which cannot be thought of as of the moment only. In a word, the hour never dawns on us when we mark the great issues forming themselves in Jesus' mind. He is always sure. When they first came to Him, He has for ever locked within the secret fastnesses of His spirit.

This does not imply that the precise details lay clear to Him. On the contrary, within the revealed purpose of the Father, accepted (before the disciples met Him) by the Son, He walked by faith, awakening every morning to enter consciously anew upon the Father's will as the call of such would come to Him within the framework of incident and accident.

This deeply seated self-awareness explains why we never come upon Jesus in the Gospels as one unaware of His destiny, or at a loss what He should do. He is Master in every situation, whether of thought or action. No fresh self-awareness meets us in any of the Gospels. What we do see is the disciple-heart awakening to the unique significance of the Master, and His thrill when such hours betoken such deepening vision on their part. They at length arrive; the whole ministry might be termed as the going forth of Jesus to meet them.

Consequently the course of such self-disclosure is manifold, but they are not the 'crises of the Christ' so much, as the 'crises of the disciples'. If we may put it this way, it is the romance of ever widening horizons, each with its own touch of mystery and

surprise and joy, until at last a point of transcendence is reached beyond which the reverent mind can go no further. It was one of awakening and deepening faith, a faith which though it broke down at Calvary was re-born at Eastertide, and has since become life's spiritual reality. As Barth has said, Jesus came 'incognito', and ever since men have sought to give Him the fit and right predicate. They were unable to rest from such an endeavour until they had applied to Him the loftiest categories hitherto only applicable to God. That the Christian mind then came into its rest, is significant.

i. The first discerned horizon of importance is that of Jesus as Prophet. We might have begun at that of 'Rabbi', were it not that by that time the name had lost much of its great value, and Jesus would have nothing to do with it.

What daring heart was the first to apprehend Jesus as within that lofty and austere category of 'prophet'? The term may mean little to us now, but to Israel the prophet was entirely God's man, His unique messenger, whose life was submerged in his perilous task. He either inspired or had to condemn his race. Against the dead drift of national life, again and again it had only been the prophet who had stood out utterly fearless for the cause of God. When all other sacred flames had been quenched in darkness, in him it had blazed with greater intensity. None so lost in his calling as the prophet, none so unself-centred; and in every age he has gone down to his death conscious only of the privilege of laying down his life for what was greater. Of such high calling some daring heart had visioned Jesus. 'Verily he

shall not lose his reward.'

The prophet's voice was still, had ceased for centuries, and (so far as some competent thinkers can estimate) the world of life was near its collapse when Jesus stepped out of His eternity into time. And John the Baptist was His herald; in Jesus' eyes, the last and greatest of them all. They did to John what the world has ever done to its best - they gave him injustice and an early grave. From the side of that grave, as it were, some eye touched unto fine issues saw in Jesus the prophet 'from alongside God'.

Discovery? Yes, because it was also revelation, a self-disclosure in that measure. To men of that mystic order of fine sensitiveness, in Jesus' presence God seemed more real, and therefore very present. In Jesus' presence to think of God was as natural as breathing. And when He spoke of a falling sparrow as an epiphany of God, the heart was stirred as no rabbi had ever moved it; thus it merged into experience. But especially when under His word conscience stirred as from deep sleep, when sin was branded as the soul's final rebellion, then to this 'prophet's call' one gave himself in surrender or 'fled him down the nights and down the days'.

What a horizon ! This last of the prophets gave life a new and a nobler beginning; a new crisis came unheralded upon the soul; a new Judge summoned the soul to the Final Bar. There was a new and awful wrath - never was there invective as His - but also a tenderer possibility. Yes, Jesus was a prophet. Yet His people could not keep Him there. He moved on.

Great as was such a position, nevertheless ^{He} thrust the mind of His disciples far beyond its confines. He was much more than a prophet, and they had to move into the deeper dimension. 'Throughout Jesus' life', Shailer Matthew declares, 'His attitude is always that of one superior to the prophet. The force of this statement can be broken only by the denial of the historicity of the passages to which appeal is made.' (30)

ii. The second horizon, profoundly deeper than the first, was that of the Messiah.

The prophets gave place to two only - God and His Messiah. Moreover, there had been many prophets, but there could only be one Messiah, and he alone would come when God's eternal 'clock' struck the destined hour.

The Messiah would bring in the Golden Age for God's people. Unlike the golden age of other races, e.g. the Grecian, Israel's lay in the future, not in the long dead past. It was an inspiration not a memory; it held a marching song, not a dirge. How they had lived in its possibility ! How many of their best had died that it come quickly ! And yet it tarried. It had been the golden nexus binding together the pre-exilic, the exilic and the post-exilic periods, their glory and agony and desire.

The dream of every deep-hearted ^{Jewish} mother and father had been that their son be that Man of God. But the long years of exile and return had come and gone, and still that hope was but a dream. And Jesus came. He was unlike any national dream, save

perhaps the holiest dream of a mother who had lived hard by God. He came 'incognito', as One who stole 'out of the everywhere into here', and hardly a ripple of life's current was stirred.

Who first glimpsed that He was the Messiah? It must have been one who could see the glory hiding beneath the home-spun; one big enough to stand up to sneer - aye, even the secret sneer of the unconverted heart, so sib to every one of us. Who made that discovery first? Who caught the earliest glimpse of that deeper than dawn-revelation, unobtrusive yet so real to the seer? Someone. Was it Peter? At least he first voiced it. Peter the chameleon; Peter the mystic. How it moved Jesus! 'Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jona! Not for naught have I waited on your vision. Ye shall see greater things than these!'

What a horizon! The ageless waiting of God on saint and seer has at last been justified. Now the race of man shares in the quickening of His purpose; in all that God means by His world; in all that He will yet do with and through it. It is all gathered up in vision. Yet Jesus will not permit His people to remain there. He both takes ^{vision} the ~~the~~ and re-makes it a finer thing.

In the Synoptists, Jesus as Messiah only dawns on the disciples at Caesarea Philippi; in the Fourth Gospel, however, it seems as early as the Baptism by John. That the Baptist recognised Jesus early, as others had failed to do, has been seriously challenged, and most modern scholars have laid it aside as untenable. There is something, nevertheless, still to be said in its defence. 'From the point of view of the early Church;

says Shailer Matthews, 'there is no a priori reason why such a conviction might not have come early as well as later in Jesus' ministry, provided some one had the insight to perceive the real character of Jesus.-- John certainly had powers of insight beyond the ordinary.-- No serious scholar would deny some plus element in the prophetic self-consciousness.' (3/)

It has been difficult, if not altogether impossible, save by conjecture, to point out when Jesus first became conscious of His messiahship. Our own feeling is that it lay prior to His surrender in the Jordan Baptism, as well as to the Temptation, which latter only knew the working out of detail, not the dawning upon Him of that phase of His self-consciousness. If we are compelled to assume - as we feel we are - that the greater intuition of Sonship was prior to both these experiences, then the lesser conception of Messiah awoke there also. When He knew that He was the Son, He must have known also that He was the long promised Messiah, God's fulfiller of His ancient promise. Who but the Son could fill the role of the Messiah? 'It would be a distinct begging of the question', to quote Matthews again, 'to declare that nothing can be genuine which portrays an early development of the messianic consciousness on the part of Jesus.'

(32)

Whatever acceptance Jesus gave to it - and He was severely critical throughout - was due to the fact that there was that in His personality which rose immeasurably superior to it, so much so that we can only read the lesser in the light of the greater.

As early as the Temple incident, He was entering upon His sense of Sonship. Between that hour and the Baptism, He had travelled the whole highway of prophetic dream and aspiration, especially those prophetic dicta concerning the Suffering Servant. After all, what is the Temptation but those great scriptures tested at last on the field of His will, that will having been deeply roused through the thrust of the Spirit to baptism and temptation?

Must we not conclude that what His disciples saw and felt in Him later, that Jesus knew much deeper and earlier, far back in 'the Hidden Years'? He read sonship in His soul;—He therefore knew Fatherhood in God. In that epochal hour, quite hidden from us, He read His own standing within the dimensions of God. That being so, realising also that He was grounded in the human, He must have read His potential fulfilment of His race's eschatological hope. But never before had that 'hope' been so charged with the ethical sanctions which moved within His spirit. He had won His way out of the 'maze' of the temptation; it was the way of the Cross. That is, Isaiah 53 and cognate passages had stormed His soul. The Son would be the Messiah, but from the side of the Father's conception, not from that of Israel.

We may now consider four stages which seem to be marked out in Jesus' treatment of the Messianic Hope.

a) He read critically the crude nationalism current in His day and turned it down.

The kingship inherent in the term *SM'WN* connoted one

vested with such dominion that before him all other powers would only stand as subject. He would be the vice-regent of God on earth, with majestic judicial functions. The Kingdom of God would be set up, the King-Messiah at its head, and all nations would bow at his footstool. A mighty redeeming process would also eventuate, with redress of wrong, tyranny overthrown, and peace established. (33)

Where the Jew went astray was to crowd this redemptive hope within the narrow limits of a fanatical and parochial nationalism: not the human race, but the Jewish race alone: not the Jew as a missionary to the Gentiles, but one of arrogant power, repaying insult with retribution, and ignominy with yet crueller recompense. This Messiah-Judge, also, was not visioned as one whose judgment would be ethicised to the extent that the privileged Jew would be more severely dealt with than the unprivileged Gentile. It is true that the 'sinner in Israel' would be unsparingly judged; but the whole conception of the 'hope' knew a deadly bias in being thirled to Nationalism. The Gentile was wholly doomed, 'brands for the final burning', and the advent of the Messiah but sounded for him the hour of doom.

Jesus turned down in utter finality this reading of God's promise, and He has since been justified of His negation. To Him, Isaiah 53 spoke a deeper and truer word. The Messiah would rule through the dominion of His pain not through pitilessness. That it brought Him to His cross is indubitable history.

But the Jew mortgaged his future when he turned from Jesus' conception of the Messiah. 'Jerusalem fell', says Temple,

'for the same reason that it rejected Christ; it fell through nationalistic ambition. Called to a unique spiritual destiny as the trustees for the knowledge of the true God, the Jews preferred to cling to their secular and worldly ambitions. That preference led to their rejection of Christ; it also led to their extinction, for it made them a nuisance to imperial Rome, which was not tolerant of nuisances. So Christ read in their rejection of Himself their coming doom. "If thou hadst known." '(3/4)

b) His partial acceptance of Messiahship as prophetically fulfilled in Himself.

He assumed the title messiah as a title He might legitimately bear, though when first He took it to heart we cannot say. But His reserve was marked. He accepted it with diffidence, perhaps, as necessary for the illumination of His disciples, though inadequate to Him. He did not thrust it forward in the early days of His ministry. He is seen as waiting until that measure of His meaning should dawn upon their opening mind. But that for Him it was a late conception, we find it hard to accept, for the reason that we are never able to point to an hour when He did not ^{know} Himself as the Son. As we saw above, it was Jesus at Caesarea Philippi who focussed the soul of the disciples upon Himself, not the soul of Jesus becoming luminous to Himself through their influence.

His acceptance of the function carried loneliness with it, so wide-ranging and compact with destiny was its office. No one could fill that position without being in a great measure aloof from other men. 'Too many moderns treat it', says Easton,

'as if it were something any religious man might possess, as if it were a normal outgrowth of a sunny piety. It was nothing of the sort. It meant that in the coming judgment, Jesus felt He would not be on man's side but on God's.' (35)

His use of the title 'Son of Man' does not seem to have been so directly messianic as many have thought. There is an elusive-ness about it. David Smith perhaps rightly said that it needed divine illumination to penetrate its meaning. In any case, only to the committed man could it resolve its mystery.

Moreover, it was not a day in which one major term dominated the messianic anticipations of the nation. As Mc Neille points out, 'there was the narrow conception of the Zealots; the -- somewhat wider-- thought of the Messiah as Son of David;-- the Son of Man --in comparatively limited circles; and there were various shades between.' (36) All of which recall us to the fact that Jesus moved with utter freedom amid conceptions which divided the race and bemused most minds . His choice of 'Son of Man' is an emphasis of sonship, and as a messianic term of self-description marked emphatic rejection of 'Son of David'. He took a word half-understood, if as much, and charged it with His own significance, lifting it up to the heights of His own nature. Such a term He bore to His cross, by way of the confession of its reality in the court of Ananias. The Son of Man thereafter dies for the race.

c) Such critical and partial acceptance meant His transmutation of the Messiahship.

His turning down of the crude nationalism then current, His partial acceptance of it as the fulfilment of the prophetic hope, His influence upon the disciples to the extent that at last even the term 'Messiah' became too small to express His Person; all such mark that from the outset Jesus was transmuting its nature in order to make it bear His own interpretation. That in the later days of His Church it broke down under such pressure, is historic attestation to the task Jesus had early set Himself.

From Bousset onwards, many modern scholars have felt that the term was seen by Jesus to be inadequate, and used only with reserve and diffidence by Him; also that it was primarily for the sake of His disciples that He lifted its crown to His brow.

The deepest aspect of such transmutation was carried through when He bore His cross outside the Holy City. It was then that the Prophet-Messiah as Son perfected His Messiahship in the sublime and lone offering of Himself, forever making it there -- after impossible for any one else to meet in equal measure the dual demand of God and need of man. His death crowned the offering of the years. 'His last death', Forsyth characteristically says, 'took its first form in His early dying to all the false and selfish thoughts of Messiahship which were presented to tempt and deflect His purity by the ideas of His nation both present and past.' (34)

d) His supersession of the term in deeper self-disclosure.

This was not by any explicit statement, so far as we can see, but was the result of the total impression of His Person

upon the disciples. They were brought at length 'far ben'. They knew that the Messiah would be related to God in a way no one else had ever known, and that in him the ages would culminate in new and startling evidence of what God had willed for His people, with reflex action upon the world. All that this meant, however, at the best, was that he would be the vice-regent, near the throne of God in duty but distant as to person, an earthly servant albeit the noblest of them, the executor of God's purpose not the intimate of His soul. Nevertheless it meant a position, an authority, and a responsibility from which even the greatest might well shrink.

There, however, the disciples were made to feel that Jesus stood. But the amazing hour came when they knew that even that almost unbearable name was not comparable to His nature and destiny Jesus had often spoken of Himself as 'Son of Man'. In awe, at last, the inner deeper converse of that word was seen, and some one whispered 'Son of God' ! 'What man had felt about Moses and the Prophets', ^{says Baillie,} they felt in a more compelling and definitive way about Jesus Christ. They felt that He had revealed to them the very face of the Most High. --- The culminating chapter in this history cannot be better summed up than in the words of an old writer whose name we do not know : "God who at sundry times had spoken unto men by the prophets ---- has spoken unto us by a Son" (38)

When this point of revelation was reached, potentially the other lesser term, Messiah, passed away. The shallower dimension

had been subsumed within the deeper. At first it has been the lone intuition of the Son Himself, but the time came when some sensitive heart was able to share it with Him, and so it passed on to others. 'This filial consciousness', Garvie feels, 'so pervades and dominates the mind and heart and will of Jesus, that it is incredible that it can at first have been an inference drawn from His Messianic vocation. It was surely an immediate intuition.' (39)

What Jesus had done was to take up the degree of reality found inherent in the prophetic value of the Messianic term into His own higher dimensional life. This is ever the mode of any evaluation - the lesser finds its explication within the greater. 'Every grade in Reality', Temple stresses, 'finds its own fulfilment only when it is possessed by a higher grade, and each higher grade uses those which are lower than itself for its expression.-- So the Lord Jesus --- had to transform the meaning of the term Messiah.' (40)

It all bears out the truth of what the disciples had gradually discerned, that He was never known to be out of intimate communion with God. It was His secret as it became His life. They never marked its absence any more than they knew its growth. Presumably, since He had come up the line of His human years, it had had its growth from dawning intuition into full-orbed certitude, but before they had known Him, it had touched its zenith, and there He abode, and they never observed its decline. He died on that height as He had lived.

On this plane of loftiest self-consciousness, which must ever be paradoxical even to the deepest Christian mystic, the term ~~Messiah~~ was superseded in the sense of being transcended. We are within the region of the Fourth Gospel preeminently. Mc Neille's criticism of the extreme wing of Liberal Criticism is that while they endorse Bousset's dictum that 'He is and must remain beyond our reach', yet they tend to minimise His person and function. He cogently remarks that the real heresy is the view which holds to the uniqueness of Jesus, and yet says that no special explanation of it is necessary.' (41)

iii. The third experimentally discerned horizon is -
Jesus is Lord.

This is the horizon that out-distances all others. It means a discovery, a revelation, and an experience.

a) Emergence and acceptance.

Discovery: Its crucial significance may well be marked. This very term, to not a few thinkers, bears the connotation of God - (YHWH). The awe and fear and honour and worship paid to the Eternal hovers about it. The Jew in his reverence for God had been so disciplined by the prophetic souls of his race that he would not even venture to utter that name. What power lay within that awe to keep a nation so silent for all these centuries that even its vowels are now lost to definite predication, lest mortal tongue should defame the name by merely uttering it ! It is indeed the Name that is above every name. Our attempted transliteration of 'Jehovah' was unknown before 1520 - an attempt

to fill the gap.

Yet someone gave it to Jesus, the Prophet-Messiah. It was a profoundly spiritual discovery, but far deeper was it revelation, a revelation to the growingly surrendered heart. His name is unknown, and it is fitting.

Some careful scholars think that when the name was applied to Jesus it did not carry that profound connotation. It may be so. Certainly it was a process of increasing discovery, and many a crisis it must have known before the crucial hour broke in the which the full significance came home to the Church.

L. McNeille, dealing with $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ and $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$, following Case, bids us remember that when the Roman power under threat of death demanded that Polycarp cry 'Caesar is Lord', 'there was no inherent reason why the supremacy of Caesar and the loyalty due to Christ should clash, except that the word $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ as used alike of Caesar and Christ had acquired a sort of divine connotation, probably from its associations with $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$. So the Christian consciousness, as in the case of Polycarp, could not ascribe the title $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ to Caesar.' A little lower, he adds significantly: 'Polycarp did not die for a mere name--- The word $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ expands in content so as to contain and express what Jesus became --- a unique authority in the realm of the moral and spiritual, the realm of the conscience and the soul.' (42)

That signifies that over the soul of His followers, the lesser meanings of $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$, as here and there in the LXX, were laid aside; they moved on and up in their spiritual discovery until ultimately Jesus and God were seen in metaphysical unity,

that is, to Father and Son ~~that~~ worship was rendered which formerly had been paid to Yahweh, with one vast difference, the gratitude of the redeemed mingled with former awe. This was the road on which the Christian heart had travelled from the first - travel and discovery.

This does not in the least affirm that such discovery was full-orbed early within the disciple-group. On the contrary, it was 'here a line, and there a line', and frequently with many a misgiving. But this all the more validates the final consent. They had been staggered all along and by many things respecting Jesus. At any moment He had been as a casement opening on to the eternities, so real to Him, so foreign to them. It was the logic, the inevitable logic of redemption that finally made them know that He had saved them with the redeeming energies of God.

He had been acclaimed by them as the Messiah up to the Cross, though implicitly there was more than they could frame in thought and word and vision. But for the Messiah to be nailed there - that had never remotely entered their mind. He was so regally good, and so awesomely powerful. What could His enemies do ? Nothing ! But He was nailed there, with an addition of indignity and infamy simply crushing in combined horror. Truly, they remembered that He had spoken to them about it, but they had not known what He was saying. Their heart had closed ear and mind. The reality of it had been the last word in desolation. We moderns shall never be able to see and feel the Cross as they experienced it. They had discovered so much in Him, that when He

died there, in all that appalling shame, they were as those who had ascended to heaven and had fallen out of its radiance into fathomless darkness. Their heart broke within them, as their world of hope and dream toppled in ruin about their heads.

Revelation: What could they do however when He stepped back into their life out of death and sepulchre, bringing with Him God's dawn of redeeming love and hope? Some one at first had given Him the name 'Lord', and here they found its demonstration. But it was not so much their discovery as His revelation. In the Gospels we observe the great names growing, as it were, in the mind of the disciples, in their deepening apprehension of His nature, but with the Resurrection He is seen stepping into final dominion over their souls. He had been Lord implicitly prior to that hour, and it only needed some epochal crystallization to gather into one dominant impression all that they had known Him to be.

It is true that $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\sigma$ has a wide field in the LXX, and need not necessarily connote 'Yahweh' but some lesser connotation; nevertheless, in Jesus' intercourse with His men there is something deeper at work than that which makes for exactitude in terminology. A moral and spiritual pressure is on them; it is theirs night and day; they are entering upon new dimensional experiences within which as yet they are not quite at home.

But all along it is the highway of growing discovery, and revelation. Jesus is giving Himself to them as they are able to bear His meaning, and the cross and resurrection are the data which confirm Him Lord.

Farquhar's volume 'The Crown of Hinduism' indicates, by its title, his sovereign conception of Jesus. One is immediately reminded that an ageless philosophy of profoundest order is summed up in the term 'Hinduism'. The deepest questionings of all the years are there attempted, with results given as the mind could reach and attain unto them. Like Ruskin's appreciation of Turner's pictures, you have only to cut out an inch of the Upanishads and you hold something like eternity in your mental palm. And Jesus is the 'Crown' of all that ! To those who know something of what it means, it is staggering. But that is the least that can be said. Here is the greater wonder:—that crown of philosophic antiquity is not pure enough for Jesus; its relative truth is not adequate either; nor is it human enough for the Son of Man; moreover, it is all too small fitly to rest upon His head; and, despite its reach back into the long past of thought, it is too time-spun to spell out the reality of His name. He must take it down, perhaps take it all to pieces, pass its ancient gold through the flames of God, and have its priceless jewels of thought re-cut so that the image and name of godling and goddess pass, that His own image and name take their place. Jesus is Lord if He can do that. Such is He doing, and at a quicker pace than when He did the same for Greece and Rome.

Experience: It was their experience of His risen life that headed up in uttermost faith their previous discovery within His revelation. Experience was the synthesis where all these relatively disparate data were gathered up. Jesus is incredible without His

cross - the Church in her experience knows that He came to die. Jesus is inexplicable apart from His resurrection - He rose amid His despairing people with the 'Keys of Hades and death' at His girdle.

We moderns cannot know Him as His early Church knew Him until ^{also} in some hour we ^{name} Him Lord - the name that is above every name. All of which means we only know Him when we see Him as One transcendent in His Person and work, in His life and death, in His cross and resurrection. Until then, He is the 'Stranger', as Schweitzer has written, and His work and influence over the years stranger still. 'The New Testament scholar', says Hoskyns, 'who is also a Christian cannot patiently permit the dogmatist or the philosopher to expound the Incarnation on the basis of an analysis of human nature illustrated by the humanity of Jesus. He was unique; and this particularity rivets the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation to the Christology and to the Soteriology involved in the Christology.' (43)

It was therefore in the experience of Easter Day that the shattered Church recovered her life and her lost nerve when she thus re-discovered and re-experienced her Lord. Perhaps only then was His deep secret laid bare before her vision. 'O eyes majestic after death'. Although the name had been haltingly on tongue during the pre-Calvary days, when death crouched at His heel, and life rose re-surgent in Him, and 'all power' had been given unto Him, then and there He became the Lord of His Church. Much still lay hidden; the full significance had not even yet fully dawned; but the event which was to establish His name and fame through

the ages have experienced. Jesus was 'the First-born from the dead', and His Church rose in Him. Apart from this, one cannot conceive a single message of saving worth from the Church to the non-believer. 'The Jesus of History', Hoskyns affirms, 'is valueless and unintelligible unless He be experienced and confessed as the living Christ. ---The experience of Easter Day controls the whole narrative of the life of Jesus in the Gospels. No early Christian wrote a sentence about Jesus which does not proceed from the conviction that He was risen from the dead and was present in their midst. As far as the early Christians were concerned, if it were only a matter of knowing Christ after the flesh, He could be left to perish, in spite of His heroism and in spite of the tragedy of His life.' (44)

Here is the spring, then, from which flowed the earliest and latest messages. To the Jewish Church, it demonstrated Him as unquestionably Messiah; a little later, to Jew and Gentile believer, He was Lord, though the border line which lies between no one can mark. It is fluid, the fluidity of deepening faith and vision. Jesus has become more than ever the object of faith, and men, as through none other, are gaining access to God. By the dependence they rest upon Him, they are establishing His eternal distinction. 'After the resurrection', says Mackintosh, 'He was somehow greater than before. He received a new place in human faith. Men now honour the Son even as they honour the Father. ---The heart of man and the heart of God beat in the Risen Lord with one pulsing movement.' (45)

In that mighty act of resurrection power, the Church felt a new era had dawned, and sin and death had been dealt with as never before. He who could thus master sin and death must necessarily be the Lord of life. Sin had been shown concretely in the cross; it had been faced and definitely outlawed; it had been conquered on its own chosen field, by way of its own choice of procedure, and was now 'placarded' throughout the world as the final enemy. At last it had found its conqueror, and His people were to enter upon His victory. Thus it was the era of man's deepest hope, since his crowning despair had not been death but sin. Jesus therefore was never more Lord than when He dealt with man's ageless and pitiless foes, sin and death.

Somehow or other, it is within this realm that we must feel how the terms 'Son of Man', 'Son of God' and 'Lord' at root share one and the same connotation. The only difference is one of apprehension. Jesus is the nexus holding them all together. As men learn of Him they move more deeply into His significance, and as they apprehend Him in one or other of His 'offices', so will the precise term be used.

b) Holiness is the unique characteristic of the revelation of the Lordship of Jesus. There have been leaders many and lords many, on this earth, yet never has there been leader or lord with such a characteristic. This particularity Jesus shares with none.

At times not a little thought respecting Jesus has been termed 'the vision of fulfilled desire', especially as it bore on the mentality of the early disciples. In these days, however, we are

dealing more justly with Christian data. It is now seen to be out of all question that the disciples could consistently have invented a figure of such unqualified holiness as Jesus has been seen to be. Moreover, no theory of 'projection' could passibly have stood up to the acid test of the centuries. Unless Jesus be held as real, then illusion rules dominantly over the best life and thought of man. Truth must be despaired of.

i. It is clear that this holiness must be viewed as the precipitate of the disciples' experience of Jesus, and not as an abstract dogma of later days. So far as the records go, the disciples never heard Him breathe a single sigh of repentance; nor, more incisive still, did they mark the need for such in His life. He stands out solitary on the face of history and literature as the one being who stood outside sin's category. Celsus in ancient days, and Strauss in modern, have suggested the contrary, but the position is as impregnable as ever. Now as then, Jesus silently yet inexorably judges the best and worst of life, but Himself is condemned by none. We have no ethical criterion so cogent as His Person, and none so merciful. 'The Son of Man', says Stevens, 'must judge men; His truth must test them and determine their place in the scale of moral being.' (46)

ii) Because of its essential nature and the influence it exerted ethically, it came to be held as integral with the holiness of God.

In the New Testament such is inescapable, hence its wonder. In holy judgment as in sovereign mercy, Jesus was found to be one with God, thus over against man on God's side. Far from lessening the gravity of sin, the result has been to make the soul more

sensitive to its approach, more adamant against its will. 'Jesus is conceived by the Evangelists', Fairbairn states, 'as a mystery which must be read through Eternal God.' (44) The result in ethical and spiritual life has been that 'we now detect and measure sin by its unlikeness to the spirit of Jesus; we know sin when we see it by ~~the~~ its difference from Him' (48) It follows, therefore, that when Jesus is known, other ethical criteria while valuable are purely secondary. They are as the taper lights in the flooding light of the dawn.

iii) Such holiness must have had its period of human growth - such seems indubitable - yet it had touched its zenith when the Evangelists came within the orbit of its influence. That there was a period of innocence which merged into positive holiness, must be adumbrated, but we come upon no hour of transition. This is also another of the many 'secrets' of Jesus. 'The sinlessness of Christ was a sinless growth. A perfect life must be a perfect evolution. God's will for life is growth, and Christ completely met it. He grew not to God but in God.' (49)

We only observe its disclosure to the disciples. Jesus, in line with His usual procedure, let it fall upon them to penetrate heart and conscience, until both discovery and revelation wrought in them a perfect work. It has been cynically said that no man is a hero to his valet; yet to those nearest Him, Jesus compelled an awe that even at this late hour moves us as nothing else. Such sprang from deeper fountains than this world can command. This bespeaks transcendence of no mean order. It must have been, as Mackintosh points out, an epochal hour when His disciples saw

that 'He stood without fear or shame in the light of God. There is no trace of healed scars, no memories of defeat.' 'Such moral perfection is to us inexplicable. Ethical psychology, based on the experience of sinners, must ever find sinlessness a mystery.'

(50)

iv) The holiness of Jesus is the crowning miracle of His life.

On the pages of the Gospels, though not so acutely in the Fourth, Jesus is shown treading every possible human road, facing ethical storms of unparalleled intensity, yet emerging with sin and its lure and power broken within His hands. Sin might at last drive nails through His hands and feet, but it never succeeded in making those hands do its bidding, nor those feet walk its way. It might crown Him with thorn, but it never set its rule within His mind. It might thrust a spear through His heart, but it never won His love. Here is the mystery of Jesus; here also His crowning miracle. The Evangelists saw its source in a unique relation to God, and there does not seem to be any other answer. To us it is His crowning miracle; to Him it was simply being true to home. 'He was higher as a moral miracle', Fairbairn urges, 'than a physical.' (51) In these days when we stress law so strongly, here is a phenomenon which calls aloud to be understood and given its rank amid discerned realities. 'It is a new and lonely type of spiritual consciousness, an unshared relation of identity with the Father.' (52)

v) That unscarred Lordship therefore gathers up all its living forces to achieve the work that only the Sinless could do, viz. redeem a guilty world back to a Holy God. We have to mark as central to all the New Testament writers the realisation of

love holy to the core and sacrificial beyond our mental and moral limits. He in whom no tragedy of sin is marked bears the cosmic burden of sin, and Himself broken and lost does for man what the noblest may not do for His brother.

Whatever we may make of it, this is the burden of the New Testament. 'How mighty the personality must have been that inspired men to such a faith.' (53)

This also, if we are to believe His reporters, was Jesus' view of His death. 'They bear witness', says Fairbairn, 'that the moment when He conceives His death most clearly, He conceives His Person most highly.' (54)

Once indeed we grasp what a quality of mentality it was which thus intellectually understood the cross as cosmic redemption, we discover what Jesus had meant to His disciples. 'As they looked at Jesus on His cross', characteristically says Denny, 'they became conscious through Him of a Love which passeth knowledge; it flashed out from His Passion and overcame them; they were suddenly aware of a goodness which out-weighed all the sin of the world and made it impotent; and through that goodness, or rather, through Him in whose Presence it was manifested to men, they were reconciled to God.' (55) It was the Sinless Lord redeeming unto the noblest ideal the cross on which He died, transmuting its squalid horror into the glory of the love of God. How could men do other than see Him 'Lord of all'?

b. He transcends us in His own self-consciousness.

We have urged that whatever growth in the apprehension of His nature His disciples may have known, we must not equate that with the self-consciousness of Jesus.

His sense of sonship meets us very early in the records. We note it in the Temple incident; it confronts us at the Baptism; its austerity stands out in moral grandeur in the Temptation; during the Ministry it is His solace and His strength; the Transfiguration lights it up with radiance unapproachable; its word 'Father' in Gethsemane speaks to us of its capacity for self-negation; while its cry 'Into Thy Hands' on Calvary shows us that it runs deeper than sin or agony - it transforms even that Hill.

It is an ultimate factor in His life, and therefore defies any analysis on our part. It will not submit to definition. We accept it as we accept Jesus - because it binds its truth upon the receptive mind. In three ways nevertheless we may attempt to describe some of its aspects:

i) The unique relation to the Father, viz. Jesus' self-disclosure to His disciples that He stood to God as the Son.

a) Through Jesus man has deeply learnt that God stands over against the world not only as Creator but as Father. It has lifted more shadows from the fear-haunted souls of men than pen or tongue can tell. On the other hand, not even the noblest of men could stand where Jesus stood. 'He was not a son among others' Denny declares, 'but the Son through whom alone the Father was interpreted to the world. His sonship was as much a mystery as the Divine Fatherhood.' (56)

The Church has always traced back its own sonship, not on the ground of natural birth, but through Jesus. Jesus' sonship, it is felt, is original, underived, ultimate; but ours is through the Son's grace and cross; it is therefore more of an adoptive or redemptive order. 'Other men become sons of God', Stevens declares, 'Jesus is the Son without qualification.' (54)

Further, this sonship of Jesus is of an utterly unbroken, unviolated quality. In this, which is so native to Jesus, we have no share. As such it is without parallel, and comparable only with the inviolate, unbroken Fatherhood of God.

We mark transcendence as we see that unbroken sonship of Jesus standing over against the broken sonship of man. And here, on the ground of brokenness, Jesus establishes the gospel of His sovereign grace. 'Face to face with the broken sonship of man', Wheeler Robinson holds, 'Jesus presents the Gospel of the unbroken Fatherhood of God.--- He made the Gospel of the unbroken Fatherhood--- credible to ~~them~~ by His own unbroken brotherhood with them.' (58)

b) This unbroken sonship, unshared with any other mind, must be seen as prior to every other claim Jesus either made for Himself or accepted when uttered by others, viz. those of 'Prophet' and 'Messiah'. Within such consciousness, He re-linked man back to God. 'He does not only tell ~~how~~ to realise a new form of relation to God,' Dobschutz believes, 'He embodies it in Himself.' (59)

So far as we can see, Jesus had no need to transform and transmute the spirit of sonship in that it was too carnal and parochial, as He had to do with the term 'Messiah'.

Moreover, there had been many attempts to assume messiahship, but no one apart from Jesus had dared to assert personal sonship. Alone of all leaders of the race, He laid the spirit of sonship across the hearts of His disciples, and they grew to honour Him, the Son, identically as they honoured the Father.

The nearest approach to ethical sonship was when the prophets thought of Israel in this sense; later, of the theocratic kings as nationally representative; finally as the exclusive title of the Messiah, the ideal King of the future. The fully metaphysical quality of sonship waited until Jesus came, since when no one else has dared assume its meanest semblance. Here as elsewhere Jesus stands in unapproachable transcendence.

Primitive Christology, it seems, struggled with the current ideas respecting the Messiah, but gradually as the spirit of Jesus wrought on His Church, utilising the data of the human years, all such ideas were clarified and deepened until the Fourth Gospel was reached. That is, the Church moved from $\pi\alpha\iota\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ to the now definite $\υ\iota\omicron\varsigma$ and from 'Son of Man' to 'Son of God', though the latter rarely, if ever, fell from Jesus' lips. The reason is that all along Jesus had to wait until vision sprang into the eyes of those who followed Him, and lesser categories were gathered up in the greater.

Thus it came about that this spirit of sonship selected, amid contending voices, that quality of Messiahship which would express His nature and purpose. 'The question has been raised', says Glover, 'as to how far Jesus identified Himself with the Messiah. It might be more pertinent to ask, with which Messiah?' (60)

It is at this point that we appreciate the pertinence of Moffatt's criticism of Schweitzer's position as 'one-sided eschatology'. 'This is the fact', he says, 'against which the theories of rigorous eschatology beat in vain---. It is the filial not the messianic consciousness of Jesus which is the basis of Christianity---. It goes back to the mind of Jesus Himself. (6/) Moreover, Harnack's suggestion that it was a 'great leap' Jesus took in accepting messiahship, is seriously lessened. What Jesus actually did was to take up the lesser term within the greater of sonship. He was the Son and He used with ~~xxx~~ freedom the office of messiah. In this realm, nevertheless, Harnack has been of incalculable service. We now see that the big value of Messiahship was that from the first it drew attention to the fact of His Person. The Church was therefore compelled to defend Him, and in so doing to understand Him, thus reaching on to the deeper conceptions which alone adequately express Him. All His work, therefore, as Harnack reminds us, was to be interpreted in the light of Himself. Jesus linked the terms 'Son' and 'Messiah' together, and slowly the former drained the latter's strength and glory into itself, until now it has ceased to be pertinent save for technical enquiry, while the term Son is of final worth.

ii. The unique humility - 'Son of Man'.

The term seems to have been Jesus' favourite expression for Himself. In utter freedom He took up this quasi-messianic word, and charged it with His own significance. It is now more of a paradox than ever before in its history.

Many reasons have been thrust forward why Jesus chose the term, but our preference is for that put forward by Dalman, viz. He chose it because it was an unusual title for the Messiah, and therefore the ~~nation~~ would not transfer to Him their own messianic ideas. Secondly, because it furnished the disciples with a problem which stimulated reflection about His person, until ^{with} the mystery deepening, He could speak to their heart. These negative and positive aspects are cogent, for they command not only the present but also the future. A further reason we feel might be added, it linked Jesus with the needs of men.

The humility that must be marked in it, is that He assumed it in the authority of One who is the Son of God. He comes to it (and the Fourth Gospel especially sounds this note) from the throne of God, lending to it all the royalty of His nature. Yet is it the name He carries to His cross. The Son of Man dies there for the sons of men. He has for ever linked this name with His passion. 'The Son of Man goeth, as it is written of Him.' When silence might have served Him in Ananias' court, He used it, then giving to it a dignity surpassing every other hint as to its meaning. Immediately, it occasioned the verdict of death on the score of blasphemy.

Once again we stand before a paradox of Jesus. He is humility itself, yet greater selfhood never existed. He must be true when so direct a question is put to Him, and at once He assumes a position and a rank involving the destinies of men. In that hour the Jewish race dug its grave; its place with God passed to ^{the} Gentile.

III

iii. The unique supremacy - 'Son of God'.

If He was the Son sharing unbroken sonship with the unbroken fatherhood, is there any serious gap between the terms 'Son of Man' and 'Son of God'? The Synoptists use the former; the Fourth Gospel the latter. —!

We saw that the term Messiah, in spite of it suggesting the ideal king of the future, the embodied hope of the race, with judicial functions eclipsing any dream of power, was all too inadequate for Jesus' person. That being so, the term 'Son of Man' must connote more, on the score that Jesus must have used it as a satisfactory definition of Himself.

May we not assume, therefore, that this title but faintly veils 'Son of God', both being of the same dimensional order of being, and speaking the same meaning to the Christian heart? We cannot be sure that Jesus ever used it, and He may well have done so. If He did, then He might have used the former for the crowd, the latter esoterically for the disciples.

In either case, we have another antinomy before our mind. No one ever stood so near men as the Son of Man; no one ever stood in such close relation to God as the Son of God. 'The Word became flesh' - is there any better uniting word? The deep transcendence overflows any word one might utter.

Essentially each term is a fit predicate for the mystery of Jesus. For example, John says $\sigma\acute{\alpha}\rho\kappa\acute{\iota}\varsigma\ \epsilon\gamma\acute{\epsilon}\nu\epsilon\tau\omicron$, and Paul writes $\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\gamma\epsilon\tau\omicron$. It is the Son of God who becomes the Son of Man. The terms point out the majesty and acclaim the grace. We cannot pit the Synoptists against the Fourth Gospel; they are one here.

In the term 'Son of Man' there dwelt the problem which induced the disciples, as Dalman said, to reflect upon His person; in the second, 'Son of God', we mark the coming of the vision which there after was to be the message of the Church to the world. 'As we listen', says Mackintosh, 'we hear only the plunge of the lead into unfathomable waters.' Only He who was essentially the Son of God could become the Son of Man, and as such win back the race to God.

The term 'Son' with the rich connotation we have found inhering within it means that Jesus has uniquely personalised the Divine Immanence, at the same time conserving the Divine Transcendence. His presence in human life is as the immanence of God in Nature. His transcendence is marked when we register our inability to keep Him within the limits of purely human nature. As God transcends Nature by indwelling it, so does the Son by assuming the human. Such is not dogma, save at a remove; it was the precipitate of positive experience on the part of the disciples.

That being so, it means profound impoverishment for life to be devoid of Christ and His fulness; a phase of transcendence of no small range. Personality needs Christ for its own fulfilment. It is impossible, therefore, to build a humanitarian account of Christ on the Gospels, or on the Church as built from the material of its pages. On the other hand, Jesus is so utterly human that He must be seen as what God intended man to be. 'The Primitive Christian', says Hoskyns, 'found the revelation of God

in an historical figure so desperately human that there emerged within the early Church a faith in men and women so deeply rooted as to make modern humanitarianism seems doctrinaire and trivial.'

(62)

Thus the old monotheistic transcendence paled into nothing before the warm personalisation of the 'Son'. That God became man; that the Father sent His Son to be the Saviour of the world, is so stupendous that one does not so much wonder that so many find it impossible to believe, but that any one can believe at all. A still greater wonder: when the heart commits itself to that Son, there is a faith as simple as it is satisfying. Jesus is never justified in metaphysics, but He is in experience. That is Jesus becomes His own vindication. ' 'Tis we musicians know.'

III. WHAT HE GIVES US.

What He gives us is bound up indissolubly with and conditioned by what He is in Himself, and what on His own terms He can be to us. The gift without the giver is bare.

Our experience of God, for example, is through Him; similarly the Divine forgiveness through His impact upon our soul; our final place among 'the many mansions' rests upon His coming to us in death's hour, or at the final consummation.

What point of faith have we reached? At a most profound Christology, within which is every positive Christian grace and promise. In addition, every vital eschatology is but a veiled Christology, since every final value and assurance rests upon His persistence and final conquest. The persistence of the

saints is the persistence of Jesus Christ. Thus our ethical standing amid swelling temptations here, as well as our final standing before the Throne yonder, rests in Him. If He fail, or be mistaken, then we are doomed.

This is what we mean by stressing the indivisibility of gift and Giver. He is His own gift; we have naught else save what inheres in Him. The Christian can ask no more; but it is already beyond the utmost limits of any possible request.

Thus for faith as for theory, there is a unity of the Father and the Son; for our daily life, as well as for that beyond the border. It is now possible for us to particularise:-

1) First, He grants us in Himself access to the transcendent, immanent God, whom He has termed Father, having first ethicised that term by the austere predicate of holiness. He has done so, by revealing His own unique sinlessness.

The historic search for God, therefore, is headed up in Jesus and there finally transcended by Him. No one has declared God as Jesus has; no one has ever given God to man as Jesus gave. No one ever dared to say prior or since His coming, 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father'. To the retort that this is Johannine, all we need to answer is, 'Yes, because it is Christian'. It floods the Church from its ancient day to this modern one.

In Jesus the 'Deus Absconditus' has become the 'Deus Revelatus', and to have known that once is to know it for ever. When Jesus says, 'I am the Way' -- No man cometh unto the Father but

me', we know that it is truth, which only our banal mind can corrupt into dogma. This does not deny that no way is open to God save the Christian, but that no one ^{else} has revealed the Father.

a) Nature-worship was a manifold form in which men sought after the Supreme, and touched here and there the vast garment of His glory as it swept a living thing throughout the animated universe. To us it seems simpler than other forms, and is so because it has lesser significance. Complexity only emerges as man rises in His conception of the Divine.

It is a matter of speculation whether the greater or smaller elements of nature were the first to be worshipped (63), but it is generally felt that the race of man in his spiritual pilgrimage has moved on from Animism to Spiritism, with Totemism as a farther advance on the one hand, and Fetichism as a degenerate branch on the other; then on to Polytheism and Pantheism and Monotheism (64) Undoubtedly, man felt the menace of things and turned for help to those forces which more or less he deemed superior to him and able to help. As the races merged, with clash and inter-clash of thought and religion, polytheism became inevitable, with Henotheism, as one tribe or race assumed the supremacy.

The more subtle worship, due to their quality of mind, was that of the poets and artists and sculptors of Greece, embodying through their own genius both savage and rarified conceptions of the gods, suggestive of love and truth and goodness, thus meeting the need of man for some personalisation of the Divine.

Since Polytheism and pantheism really confuse moral issues, it is not surprising that as the ethical sense developed and powerfully influenced religious notions, even those representations of the Divine as set forth by genius failed to satisfy the human soul in its moral quest for truth and God. The greater poets of Greece, as the greater prophets of Israel gave the nobler truth, but it was only when Jesus came that 'Great Pan died'.

The mystics of nature in all ages, as well as those of art and literature and sculpture, have sought to use their own special technique in order to press back the barriers of spirit and come immediately into communion with God. In such as Plotinus, we have it carried to the extreme degree. Here especially there is the mood that the flesh must be sloughed off; consciousness is to be negated by being superseded; one must cut loose from every definite fact and factor; the soul must go out 'Alone with the Alone'. (65) It is a price great numbers have been willing to pay, since man is insatiable for the Living God. But how vast the difference when 'the Revealer and the Revealed, the Guide and the Way, the Enlightener and the Light' (66) draw near.

- b) Comparative Religions roughly may be divided into ~~two~~:-
- i) Pantheism of India, into which may be gathered all the animistic and spiritistic and polytheistic faiths; ⁱⁱ⁾ within the second, the austere nature faiths may be seen to culminate in the monotheistic faith of the prophets of Israel.

As Galloway points ^{out}, (67) a strongly ethicised people cannot rest either in the extremes of pantheism (though a partial

satisfaction may be known) or in the naked sovereignty of God as in Islam, though that latter may breed a dominant race. The via media is the prophetic faith of Israel, with some stress on immanence in nature and man, in ethical processes, and in national achievements. The prophets knew spirit possession. (68)

c) In Jesus there is an immediate and ethical and spiritual fellowship offered beyond that which any other faith can give. Here we are beyond tribal, racial, nationalistic or prophetic religion: we are at the apex of man's long quest for God, and God's ageless revelation of Himself to man. In Jesus the truly individual, hence universal, religion has dawned on man (69). Jesus gathered up reverently and gratefully all that had truly been revealed to or discovered by man, and then pointed to His own breast as final fulfilment.

He split asunder in so doing the whole line of history. It is now and for all time a case of marking the calendar B.C. and A.D. Deeper than that, He has made it impossible for any religion to stand that cannot integrate within its tenets the stark and lone sovereignty of the holiness of God.

When we recall that He was 'unlettered' according to the pedantic scholarship of His day, that He was outside the 'schools', a worker on a lowly plane, one deemed guilty of blasphemy, and at length was branded by the Roman scourge, was made the subject of obscene jest and filth, was shamed and nailed to a gallows tree, was crowned with pitiless thorn in mockery of His absurd claim to kingship: when we remember this, and know that the highest

spiritual thought of centuries has seen Him occupying the throne of God, one is lost in wonder.

It is the supreme paradox of history. Along such lines of sheer horror He has established the profoundest intuition of the love of God to all men. If we are to believe that most inexplicable fact, it is by way of Jesus and His cross. It means access not to the vestibule or the audience chamber of the Divine, but to His very heart. 'I am the reality', He says, and our heads are bowed in grateful awe.

Needless to say, if we are to be true to the New Testament emphasis, such access is not native to man as man; that is, it is not a question of his birth, or a discovery through his reason: it is the transcendent gift of the Son who became man that 'He might lead many sons unto glory.' 'For us men and for our salvation He endured the Cross'.

Here we mark the differentia of the Christian faith from other faiths: they are not essentially transcendent in their mediators. For example, Mithras speaks of himself as 'a fellow wanderer', on quest as his disciples if haply he may arrive. Jesus is transcendent whenever we make contact with Him. These faiths then lack the Christ; they lack consequently the values that inhere in Him; they cannot know that access to the Father which is His gift to His own; their eschatologies (if they have such) are not grounded in the validities which He brings with Him. That is, they lack the Way, the Truth and the Life; they wait until He comes whose right it is to reign. In that sense, He only has given us God, in giving us the Father. What transcendence!

ii. ~~Not~~ only does He grant us access to the Father, but He grants us to be partakers of that Life and Love and Peace and Power so radiantly manifested in the Fourth Gospel as Divine.

Here also we mark the divergence of the Christian message from such mysticism as we saw was summed up in Plotinus. The way of Christ is not that of extreme negation (40) but of self-completion through the plus which Jesus communicates by raising us to His own plane of being. Unlike the Plotinus' mysticism, and that of India, Jesus will not permit the scrapping of any validity inherent in man. He saves and preserves the whole man. He does so by enabling us to partake of the Divine nature, as He partook of the same; by giving us power to master our own selves; by relating us more deeply than formerly to our social order for service and fellowship. We are thus redeemed from harmful bias and anti-social idiosyncrasy.

Although Jesus is opposed to the extremes of pantheism and theism, and in His strongly ethicised sanity saves from absorption on the one hand, and chilly indifference on the other, He gives us in greater measure what both these systems set out to give, viz intimacy of life with the Divine, plus the note of stark sovereignty. In Jesus we are at home in the love of the Father; His will becomes the perfect law of life; in which law we read the meaning of our world. Love and law are sovereign for ever. Accordingly, we are driven to explicate this phenomenon. 'He who reveals God to man', Garvie argues, 'and redeems man to God, must stand in a relation to God which demands --solution. Theology must find a

place for Him in the Eternal Nature of God corresponding to His place in the temporal history of man.' (41)

Here we see the decisive factor in the Christian faith.

Unlike others, it does not lie in the possession of a literature - that is created by something greater - not in any ritual : it lies in the solitary personality of Jesus, concerning whom no term has yet been found fully exhaustive of the wonder that is in Him so as to leave no unexplained residuum of Person or work.

This is why the elaborate and relatively satisfactory 'Mystery Religions' went down before the advance of Christian life. They paled as 'the Son of Righteousness' came up flooding that early world with His dawn. They were forerunners of the Gospel in their message of the need for redemption and sanctification, and a true word on immortality. They voiced also that tireless appeal of stained man for forgiveness and cleansing, and for access to the inmost Divine. Yet all the while, near as they may have been to the threshold of the Divine, they could not pass over. But when the Son came bearing His cross, at a word, and with Pierced Hands He flung open that door, and Jew and Gentile alike became partakers of the Divine nature. In that saving hour, the Mystery Religions saw the reality for which they were in search. They died that He might live. The Christian Church, as Angus pointed out, possessed a unique advantage over all such systems 'in having an historic Person as Founder, whose Person was greater than His teaching.. Herein lay its originality, and the main secret of its power---Christian preachers did not

require faith merely in Jesus' teaching or in His resurrection, but in Himself.' (42)

iii. He mediates the Divine forgiveness to us as a positive experience of cleansing and renewal and re-creation, out of which manifold operation, data of profoundest weight are gleaned for theological formulation as to His Person and work.

Jesus does what on normal grounds seems both impossible and incredible, viz. He grants such an austere forgiveness that a man is able to transcend his shadowed past, and move on to live a redeemed life.

When one recalls what he has read of the Greek 'Furies', the lame-footed but inexorable retribution of Horace, the dark 'Karma' of India's thought, and considers also that all such theories were hammered out on the anvils of the keenest thought through experience, it begins to dawn on one how transcendent must Jesus be who does what all these theories find impossible, viz. forgive, and re-create the deeply forgiven soul. Without decrying the thought of any other faith, this act of Jesus is sui generis, the transcendent work of one who must Himself be even more transcendent. A new creation is the result. Jesus lifts the shadows, calls forth latent powers, and forwards life's best. 'The finality of our religion', says E.F. Scott, 'consists in nothing else, than in its endless capacity of growth and self-renewal--- "a well of water springing up into everlasting life"'

(43)

The paradox is that unlike the pre-suppositions of other faiths, viz. that only one of utmost purity may approach, in Jesus

God comes in sacrificial search of His lost ones, and with passion-ate joy brings them home. It is an infinite intimation that the Divine transcendence is crimsoned in its immanence in the Cross, hence at once the austerity of its forgiveness and the wonder of its mediation. All of which adumbrates that Jesus is as indispensable as God Himself. Alone of human-born, He stands over against us as the incarnation of Almighty God in sovereign saviourhood; on the other hand, He lifted 'the Cup' with a human hand to His human lips.

Here we read the adequate reason why He left no Book or Creed but only the aura of slowly distilled glory, a growing wonder as to the meaning of His Person, an influence as condemning as it was saving, and a love that searched even while it saved. He could make no greater gift than Himself, hence the forgiven soul, in Paul's words, says: 'He loved me, and gave Himself for me.' Than which there is no greater word in the literature of religion or of the soul.

As a result, and inevitably, His people cannot think of God save in terms of Jesus, and if they had to choose between either, it is to Jesus they would commit their immortal soul. And yet the glory of God is thereby enhanced. 'Both Buddha and Mohammed', Otto Borchert points out, 'can be left out of the religions they founded----. And when the master departed, his followers got on without him, for no man is indispensable. Jesus alone can place Himself alongside the indispensable God.' (74)

It is forgiveness starkly valid. Unlike so much

modern psychologically-engineered forgiveness which is more or less unethical forgetting - and to forget is not to be forgiven, though to be forgiven is God's mercy of final forgetfulness - the forgiveness of Jesus is never known until the sin is faced, disowned, laid aside, and the new attitude to which He introduces us is accepted as the law of the heart. His work is therefore the divinest in the soul. In such an hour the forgiven heart names Him most deeply Lord and Judge, the first and last Master of the human spirit. 'He is especially King and Lord when we realise how He became Redeemer, and what is the nature of His saving act. --- The supreme sacrifice is in principle the final judgment, and the supreme victim is the last judge ----- the law's Lord.' (45)

This forgiveness therefore has nothing abstract about it. No one is forgiven on formal grounds. The soul, alone, that stands in the act and fact of surrender within that holy spirit of Christ, has that gift which he so deeply needs. That desperate need is met on transcendent grounds. Hence the gratitude that results. 'He did not talk about sin-bearing love; He exhibited it. They knew in His presence what forgiveness cost. They saw it in His face, and heard it in the tones of His voice. They were aware that He had carried on His own spirit the weight which was lifted from theirs, and that their debt to Him was unmeasured.' (46)

Such is a miracle of a transcendent order. To be sure that Jesus is its incarnate causality, is to be compelled to give Him the lone place and apply the predicate that man can only give to God. It is not a matter of theological caprice or speculation; it

is to the ethical world what gravitation is to the physical - utter and frank inevitability. 'How self-evident', said Clifford, 'is everything that comes from Him; just as if it could not be otherwise - so does the fountain break forth from the depths of earth, clear and flowing free.' (44)

iv. All of which attests the fact that He brings us within a world of greater dimensions, otherwise unknown, sometimes called liberty or freedom, but better understood as meaning His own emancipating and enriching friendship. Jesus grants us in and through Him the right to live on the plane of His own life, i.e. as He lived it out on earth, never the slave or victim of any purely earthly thing. It means a measure in experience of personal transcendence over environment and circumstance and the sin-restricted past, even over its present crippling memory.

He does so by mastering the inner world of our life, its mind and heart and will. In the measure that we are not so mastered, we are still captive to life's terrible death - its sin. 'What He gives us first', was Forsyth's own experience, 'is not ourselves, or our souls, or our progress, destiny, and perfection, but Himself, His holy self. --- We are saved into an obedience before we are saved into a liberty ---. God's greatest gift to us is a Master and not simply a manhood. It is as we get a new Master that we grow to new men.' (48)

This is how He mastered the blasé yet fear-stricken ancient world. He became its Lord, and thus conquered its sins, its fears, its demons, and its darkneses - and they were deep ! The Early Church simply exulted in its life in Him, and in its authority.

In which demand both patrician and plebian stood equal, and with them, for the first time, the right-less slave. Seneca's dictum, summing up terribly slavery's diagnosis, 'Once a slave half a man', was wholly converted into 'Once a Christian twice a man'. So will Jesus yet deal with 'the inferiority complex' of this modern age as He dealt with that slave-complex of Greece and Rome. He gave the slave back lost manhood and womanhood, though such had already been soiled and scarred, and with it the plus that outweighed even that tragic loss experienced. What He has done He will yet do, if humanity comes within vision of His face. There is a deep disquiet abroad, and the future is uncertain. Hope best lives in His presence where the best things grow as if within their native habitat. All He asks is a faith vested in Him without reserve and without compromise; that done, the ancient miracle repeats itself. In his semi-pantheistic volume, 'The Story of my life', Richard Jeffries said that he never flung himself down upon the earth, but felt that he was on the threshold of the illimitable. The deeper wonder is that in Jesus one is given the grace of crossing over. There is no transcendence we know comparable to this. Strange we cross over so seldom, if ever.

v. Jesus' supreme gift through which all others are made available is the gift of the Holy Spirit of God.

Although we cannot trace any formal treatment or doctrine of the Spirit, in the New Testament, yet there are sufficient data to work upon. In comparison with spirithood in the Old Testament, that of the New is epochal and creative.

a) The Holy Spirit as Gift.

The first note in this respect is that of promise, (cf. Mk. xiii. ii; (Matt. 20 and Lk. xii. 12); with possibly Lk. xxiv. 49 (cf. Acts I. 4-8). If John xiv. 16, 18, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7 can be accepted, then the conception is greatly strengthened. It was a promise contingent upon Christ's departure from the world (Jn. xvi. 7); and Jesus in the Fourth Gospel makes it jointly with the Father. (Cf. Jn. xv. 16-26; xv. 26; xvi. 7-13). There seems to be no need to see any vital obstacle in Jn. xx. 22-3, which perhaps might be translated 'Take Holy Spirit', the omission of the article rather helping out the suggestion. It could therefore be understood as Jesus' own spirit quickening His endangered disciples for the immediate stress of the Cross, and prior to the full enduement of the Spirit.

The next point is that of the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost. Whatever potentiality may be read in Jn. xx. 22-3 must be seen as an actuality in Acts ii. 1-4. Indeed, the Acts of the Apostles might well be termed the Acts of the Spirit, since this is the dominant note of the volume.

The third aspect of gift bears on the function of the Spirit, viz. to reveal to the alien world the veiled significance of Jesus. The sphere within which this is to be wrought out is the Church of believing hearts, In this sense, though not in the arrogance of the Roman Church, it is true that 'Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus'. We mark here a striking divergence from the spirithood found in the Old Testament. Jesus gifts the Spirit in the sense that 'He makes the Spirit utterly dependent upon Himself.' (49)

All the operations of the Spirit are to be gathered up within this task. If true, then no one can be so transcendent as Jesus, apart from the Living God.

b) As definitive of the Holy Spirit.

The doctrine of the Spirit completes the doctrine of God. The crudest form of spirithood, hardly to be termed religious, is Animism, in which belief man sojourned for centuries; the loftiest, prior to Christ, is that of ethical spirithood in the nobler portions of the Old Testament; the supreme contribution is the doctrine in the New Testament as the Spirit-Revealer of Christ who is Himself the revelation of the Father. 'The path that takes us farthest is that which the Risen Lord makes for man in the trackless realms of the Spirit.' (80) It is here in individual personality, as W.M. Clarke points out, (81) that the Spirit's fundamental work is done. It is the sphere of the true universal, far beyond tribal and national mass experience. Now God and man have an opportunity they never knew before.

In our ambiguous day, it seems, the doctrine of the Trinity [Wheeler Robinson defines it as 'Fatherhood, Saviourhood, and Spirithood' (82)] has been more of a hindrance than a help, and there is a strong tendency to drop one at least of the component terms. It is therefore well to remind ourselves, as Clarke affirms, that this manifold presentation of the Divine became light not darkness to the early Christian. 'The Divine Son had been among them, the Divine Spirit dwelt with them, by both the Divine Father was made real to them. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and God by the Spirit was

revealing Himself, and giving life to them. This was their Trinity.'

(83)

The strict exegesis of Jesus' teaching on the Spirit in all the Gospels undoubtedly underscores the full personality of the Spirit. Grammar must be gainsaid, if this is not accepted. Jesus blends the neuter with the masculine, the impersonal with the true personal, but the emphasis is on the latter. Once again, we mark Jesus' advance upon Old Testament presentation. It is true that in the Old Testament there are occasions where spirithood approximates to the personal aspect, but not with the full-orbed clarity of the New. In the same way, inferentially, Jesus turns down all the immanental systems of religious thought that posit the impersonal as the higher category. A further important point is that Jesus transcends the transiency of spirithood as found in the Old Testament by promising that the Spirit shall abide with His people for ever. In the Old Testament, the spirit was given in the sense of influence or special power, and recalled once the occasion had been consummated. The Holy Spirit comes to stay. The differentia is epochal.

It is readily seen that the whole teaching of Jesus rests on His own experience of the Spirit as personal and abiding. At the Baptism He received a fresh quickening as the impact of the Spirit upon Him; He heard Him speak; He saw Him point the way of the will; He felt His thrust forward to encounter the attack of the enemy: all factors of deep personality. Hence where Jesus is known, the Impersonal is obsolete, since the Personal Spirit is in possession, whether it be the Impersonal of India, or the Hegelian. 'Personality' says Wheeler Robinson,

'is the biggest of all categories we can conceive. We conjecture degrees below it, but we have not yet succeeded in conceiving any degree above it, other than a more perfect form of itself.' (84)

c) Can Jesus be equated with the Holy Spirit?

Not a little of Pauline and Johannine thought seems to affirm this equation. 'The Lord means the Spirit', quite a number of careful scholars hold as ~~as~~ clear an identification as language can express.

There is a pertinent reason underlying this desire to show the validity of such an equation. It is the fear lest by holding to separate personalities, there be a compulsion to adhere to separate conscious entities, thus postulating implicitly at least a tritheistic conception of the Divine.

The fact is, however, that we ought not to apply rigorously our own view of separate selfhood. Our embodied, and thus separate, disparate selfhood sharply divides us off one from another, so that really we have no adequate conception of the unity in diversity which may appertain to the Divine. Also, we are fettered by spatial and temporal categories which must be transcended in the Godhead. Here in a sense, the thought of Plotinus should be helpful to us - there can be a negation of non-spirit factors.

In spite therefore of the dangers attendant upon the separate selfhood of Jesus and the Spirit, we do well to adhere to the ancient Christian witness on this point. That our conception of its truth may be as full of danger as a sieve is of holes, is no inducement that we should give it up. In textual criticism the harder reading is often ipso facto to be preferred. May it

not be so in the present instance. 'Christ is God as man', says Mackintosh, 'the Spirit is God within man's life, and these revelations indicate not transient phases but eternal realities.'

Although it is true that Paul sometimes seems to suggest equation, is it not going too far to say that on the whole he does so? Is it not more unity within diversity he is stressing than equation? When Paul met Jesus as the Risen Christ on the Damascus Road, he knew that He was the Jesus who had been crucified, and whom he must trust as Messiah and Lord. In that hour he knew the Spirit coming upon him as never before, but he never confused the Spirit with the Crucified. The Spirit had never become $\tau\acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\iota$. It seems, therefore, that we mark again the play of antinomy within Paul's mind. It was on Jesus he put his trust; it was through the Spirit's agency he was enabled so to do. It is all parallel to his insistence upon the sovereignty of God and the freedom of man. Semitic as he was, he held both conceptions within the capacious reaches of his mind, and at will stressed one or other as necessity demanded. In doing so he marred neither, but on the contrary aided their respective fulfilment. Man is never so free as when God has the last word.

The Fourth Gospel teaches that it is in the Spirit Jesus comes to us, but not as the Spirit. In experience, however, it is almost impossible to show a clear-cut distinction between the work of Christ and that of the Spirit. Similarly it is not clear where the action of the Son ends and that of the Father begins. The action of the Godhead is involved, and our eyes are dim. It all emphasises however the transcendence of Jesus.

d) The Holy Spirit as 'Incognito'.

The necessity of equating the Spirit with Jesus is lessened by noticing that revelation posits the Spirit as always 'incognito', the immanent Divine, for ever submerged or, better perhaps, veiling Himself in His function. 'The Spirit's work' Stevens says, 'is the invisible continuously operative counterpart of the historic action of God in Christ.' (85) 'He shall not speak of Himself,' Jesus said. The Father is revealed in the Son; the Spirit is the revealer of the Son; but who is the revealer of the Spirit? We apprehend Him as personal by the work He does for us: only the truly personal can reveal the personal. He who can draw aside the veil from the face of Christ, must Himself be as personal as He.

It is therefore surprising that Denny champions the equation of the Spirit with the Risen Christ. 'Paul never knew Christ,' he says, 'except as Spirit.' (86) But, as Garvie points out, has not Denny overlooked the very obvious fact that Paul knew Christ had become — for us? Further, Garvie taxes Denny with impatience and intolerance to ideas not congenial to his own type of piety, and says that he is neither accurate in his exegesis nor in his theology. 'The Risen Christ', he goes on to say, 'as continuing personally the historical reality of the earthly Jesus is even more definitely personal for our thought than God. We cannot think of the Spirit so definitely personal, though as the Spirit of God He must be conceived as personal as God is. That there can be no separation of the Spirit from Christ, His activities from Christ's presence, is no adequate reason for

not taking up into our constructive theology the distinctions which the writers of the New Testament make.' (87)

It seems clear that the real difficulty lies in not being able to penetrate the self-submergence of the Spirit in His function within the Church and the individual. And here the volume of Gordon's which was influential a generation ago may be of service. 'There is a holy deference', he says, --- between the Persons of the Trinity in regard to their respective ministries. When Christ was in office on earth, the Father commends us to Him---; when the Holy Ghost had entered upon His earthly office, Christ commends us to Him--"He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches". As each Person refers us to the teaching of the other, so in like manner, does each in turn consummate the ministry of the other.' (88)

It may also be that Paul's kenotic principle, not now so stressed as earlier, points us the way of a solution. May it not be that the term $\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\nu\omega\sigma\epsilon\nu$ marks that as a principle it is immanent in the Trinity? There may always have been a self-limitation of the Divine Sovereignty. The central point is Jesus. The Father came 'incognito' in the Son. Equally the Spirit comes 'incognito' in the Risen Christ. If the Νεϋος was Jesus apprehended as ϫρῖς , then here we have the stooping of omnipotence to undertake the problems of a lowly life. It is like the harnessing of Niagara to light a cottage.

It seems fairly reasonable therefore to assume the subtlest and most profound inter-relation between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Here is a unity beyond our experience, and

perhaps only in rare mystic vision can it be apprehended. We are not only tethered by body, but in a still deeper measure we are stained and thwarted by our sin. It may therefore well be that if we could surrender ourselves more fully to the Spirit, He would lead us anew into this mystery which baffles reason while it calls upon faith to a fresh acceptance.

e) The Church from earliest times has seen that the work of the Spirit is the continuation and growing completion of the purpose and work of Jesus.

The Church, — individual by individual, becomes the organ through which, or the sphere in which He reveals the Christ to His people, and through them to the world outside.

In a measure, she becomes the cosmic mystic-body in which the Christ dwells, just as He indwelt His physical frame in the human years.

Here we may see, to some extent, the purpose of the Immanent Christ. Through His Church, under the ministry of the Spirit, He is creating a 'new heaven and a new earth', which, paradoxically can only come down 'from above'.

This immanence of transcendence within the Church throws a flood of light, to the Christian, over the whole world of phenomena and history. The Spirit of God has ever been within His creation, a sacrament of love and care and waiting purpose.

The manifest evil within the world does not deny that nobler fact to the Christian, since he knows that the Spirit indwells him, yet is sin not wholly conquered, though in the

Cross its death-knell has sounded. He therefore sees Jesus in the Spirit, limited though still transcendent, and the patience of that Holy One breeds a courage as it demands consecration. Thus he reads also the calling of cosmos out of primeval chaos, as when the Spirit 'moved over the face of the waters'. The lesson then is clear, the decisive factor has always been the immanent Spirit of God, and, as such, history is under control, and is yet to spell out the victory of that purpose. That victory will have achieved its end when men are as subject to His Spirit as was Jesus during the days of His flesh.

Here then is the purpose of the Spirit clear, viz. the creation through the Gospel of the noblest personality. The Spirit not only presents Christ as Redeemer, but also as the Ideal Man unto whose stature His people must be conformed. Jesus therefore is not an example for some, but for all. In Him God's final thought of personality is summed up. The Spirit presents Jesus as Real Man, and also as our vision of what God's Ideal Man is, i.e. man as God originally planned him to be.

Jesus through the Spirit is consequently against all idealisms of the absolute order where personality is but as an epi-phenomenon, a shadowy substance cast by the egress and regress of the Absolute. Jesus leads us on to fullest effective personality, and the faith that negates this is contrary to Christ and His will for man and his future. Jesus is our norm, despite the gap that may yawn between. 'He lived embosomed in Deity', said Fairbairn, 'filled, penetrated, transfigured by God, yet not by a God who was simply a fulfilment of desire, or the infinite abyss which

swallowed up the very personalities which it had produced.' (89)

That being so, in Jesus through the ministry we have all that the immanental systems can offer us, minus their flaw in personality-negation. We can take, e.g. the surrender note of Plotinus, without accepting his 'abyss' in which personality is sloughed off. We can accept Spinoza's 'Quic quid est, in Deo est', and his 'Amor intellectualis Dei', without the ethical and personal negation which necessarily inheres within his pantheistic system. We can allow something of the vast sweep of Hegel's vision of the onward-moving Absolute, ad infinitum, without accepting the impersonal implication of his dialectic. We can still be awed by the hoary pantheism of questing India, and know that the asceticism begotten of its tenets must needs be accepted sanely by us if we would tame the brute within our spirit, without agreeing to the dogma of a passionless Brahma as the All-absorbing One, whose predicate must be utterly negative- 'Neti, Neti', 'Not that, not that'.

In a word, the earnest of the Spirit in Jesus, is that at last our dreams of an unsoiled, complete personality will yet be realised, and that already Jesus has set the goal, and summons us to follow. That this is so, both our conscience and our longing as illumined by the Spirit affirm the truth.

f) This word of quest marks our perennial need of the personal Holy Spirit, since life always stands facing the Inscrutability of God. In that presence, unaided by the Spirit, we are both blind and dumb, and we need eyes and ears. Such, the Spirit becomes to the man in Christ. This is not dogma but experience.

The frailty of our mind is inadequate to explore the far spaces of the Divine. The very connotation of the term God suggests this. It is wise to admit our helplessness.

Further, this inscrutability of God is pertinent respecting the 'historic Christ'. There is a 'mysterion' about Jesus. He is the strangest of all strangers in our world. He speaks both in the accent of the Jew and of God. He is distant from us in years and customs. He is removed from us by His cross. His demand is both incredible and impossible, ^{viz.} that we leave all and follow Him. In every sense He is scandal and stumbling block. As Schweitzer informs us, the more we reach back and down into His human years, the more He eludes us, and all we have are antinomies that baffle our solution. We need a synthesis, and have nothing out of which we may make such.

That is, God in His wisdom has shut us up to His Holy Spirit. Let us be grateful and wise. Age after age, the Spirit has taken the 'mysterion' and has revealed it 'unto babes'. If such be His wisdom, how easy it is for us to be wise in His school. There the inscrutability of God passes; there the silence of the Divine ceases; there we learn anew or for the first time John 3.16.

g) Through the Spirit, consequently, Jesus becomes our Living Contemporary. It seems that He must first be Redeemer. Until that hour is known, He is a memory and not a Presence, a tradition and not a Friend, a dogma and not a Deliverer, an ethical appeal but not a Lord. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to present Jesus.

Until He is found as Redeemer, we have no sure ground for immortality. Immortality is grounded in the Risen Christ as He

draws near us in the Spirit. There we are able to hear for the first time 'Because I live ye shall live also'. It cannot be given secondhand; it must be heard. If it is not heard, then silence still floods that after world. That means, that the Spirit grounds assurance of immortality in the Contemporaneous Christ, and it becomes the experience of the believing heart. The reason is as simple as all the great things of the Spirit: the believer has already 'passed from death unto life' - a paradox to the non-Christian, but the life-breath of the man who experiences it.

CHAPTER THREETHE SOLITARINESS OF HIS CROSS

One of the gains of modern thought in the realm of theology has been an emphasis upon the humanity of our Lord. As a consequence, His cross is being interpreted in the light of the solidarity of the race, and of its corollary, the Law of Heredity. His passion therefore has been related to the vicarious suffering of that innumerable host who have laid down their lives for God and man.

It is a healthy re-action from much of the theology of the past, a correcting of that excessive intellectualising of the cross which has often left a residuum of dogma at variance with the moral sanctions of the mind, and to the loss of faith in many sensitive hearts.

Today we seem to be drawing nearer to the Christ who made His cross the deepest revelation of the Father's heart. 'At His touch the cross lost all its associations of horror and crime and death, and gathered about it the attributes of a pity that never slumbered, a mercy that never failed, a love mightier than the grave.' (I)

We are therefore in less danger of making the cross a dogmatical abstraction, partly because we see more clearly than those of the past that the principle of vicarious suffering is inherent within the heart of creation, and operative everywhere in human life. It is at all times, and in whomsoever realised, one of the greatest affirmations of the quality and

purpose of God.

All through life I see a cross
 Where sons of God yield up their breath;
 There is no gain except by loss,
 There is no life except by death.
 There is no vision but by faith;
 No glory but by taking shame,
 No justice but by taking blame;
 And that Eternal Passion saith,
 'Be emptied of glory and right and name'. (2)

Thus the present hour is less dogmatic because more human. As a direct result, the Master is more easily seen and more eagerly welcomed as the Head of the Race, the epitome and crown of the world's sacrificial host, as One in whom the race's moral and spiritual intuitions sum themselves up in unique and wondrous austerity and beauty.

At the same time, there is a marked solitariness. He easily outstrips the world at its best. It is a witness to His inner nature, an attestation of the fact that He is not only the spiritual Head of the race, but its outstanding miracle.

It is a solitariness that does not bar Him off from us, but on the contrary draws us to Him, and draws Him to us, which is the affirmation of the Incarnation. He is always revealing His kinship with us, through which we are to realise otherwise unattainable ideals. That nearness, though more judicial than any judge on earth, is more potent with high destiny than all our fears. In rare mystic hours there is something of inner feeling that the day will come when the implicit promise of His life will become the actuality of our own. 'Our Lord is no outsider coming to the rescue of downfallen human nature---

There is an original relationship --- with the life of mankind, making Him the Eternal Self of ourselves---. His Incarnation -- is the filling with His own presence of a nature which has ever been His own.' (3)

Nevertheless, the qualities that have gone to the making of His cross reveal that He and His work belong to an order of reality unique and solitary. No category of interpretation has yet been known which does not leave more for future explication than it itself discloses.

Why this likeness yet stranger unlikeness? The cross of Christ has become the symbol of Eternal Sacrifice, the vast stoop of Eternal Love into fathomless darkness. The strange quality of the cross is that it is ultimate sacrifice; the ultimacy of God's love inheres within it. Against the fiercest and bitterest opposition such has been the expression of the Church's richest faith, as grounded in her experience of the grace of God. She unweariedly affirms that the cross is where the Eternal Spirit broke in upon the world in redemptive mercy and sovereign purpose.

It is not greatly surprising, therefore, that it has been impossible to unite the theories of the centuries respecting it. In one way of thought there has been cosmic unanimity, viz. that at the cross Christ died to save a world beyond its own redemption. The theories of the Church as explanatory of it, however, have shown the greatest possible divergencies. A historical review of the past centuries of Christological

thought, under unbiassed and competent authorities, will immediately reveal that while the fact as a supernal reality has been uniformly held in an unbroken series of soul - confessions, the views as to its nature have varied in almost every age. The ages have taken their dominant categories of thought and with these have sought to explicate the mystery of the cross. That they have succeeded, is attested by our present faith; that they have failed, is witnessed by our continual investigation into its 'mystery'.

It may be that language, even at its most sensitive point, is inadequate to enshrine that solitary cross. From Paul to Origen, from the latter's school to Calvin and the Reformers, and from these to our modern day, there are summed up changes in approach and acceptance that are marvellous in the extreme. Only such a fact as the cross could possibly have sustained and endured such variations of belief without suffering irreparable loss. Behind even the crudest attempt to express the Redeemer's passion there has been the richest human emotion, the love of the redeemed heart.

Such a sense of fathomless indebtedness underlay the Ransom Theory of St. Gregory; the Satisfaction of the saintly Anselm; the Penal Theory of the judicially-minded Reformers; down to the Penitential and Moral Influence theories of McLeod Campbell and Bushnell respectively. They have all given sweat of brow and conscience to tell out as best they may the finalities of the inimitable cross. They have honoured their Lord by the quality of their intention, of which He alone is

conscious. The Church is for ever their debtor, They all spoke to their age as their experience compelled them. 'Because a sorrow is supreme, it fixes and rivets the gaze. The sorrow of the cross is silent, but, as one of the Fathers said, the silence is a clamorous silence, detaining us, refusing to let us go till we have listened.' (4) 'It is the power and the witness of victorious and availing sorrow which are His through the eternal years. He has offered up one sacrifice for sins for ever, and the memory of that sacrifice is green.' (5)

Where may we ground its authority today? The works of ancient and modern thinkers on this theme are being read as keenly as ever. Their theories are received in the measure they are able to move the mind and heart of the reader, but no one of them finds a consent comparable to the demand of the cross itself.

One fact slowly wins the consent of the mind at its best, viz. that the authority of the cross is none other than the authority of His Person. We are here on the ground of the New Testament and of the best teaching of the Fathers. They stressed the truth that the solitariness of the cross shares in the unique reality of His nature. To understand the cross, we must know the Redeemer. He and His work are inseparable. To detach the cross from the Sufferer, is to make it an impossible abstraction. We can never separate the cross from the Christ, nor may we view His Person apart from the cross. In Him the cross emerges in all its unique grandeur, conquering its deadly shame, and must be seen as the last, the deepest

sacrificial reality of all time.

Save on the grounds of the ageless Christian faith, it seems impossible to account satisfactorily for it. On superficial grounds, it ought to have been buried in oblivion in distant Judea, but the very ends of the earth re-echo with its message, and all the peoples of the earth are influenced by it. Humanity cannot be indifferent to it, though groups of men may scorn its message. Christ with His cross makes an abiding impression on life everywhere, as of the quiet sure impact of God. Jesus makes Calvary the epitome of all man's desire to get right with God; at the same time, He centres in that crucial act of His cross the timeless quest of God for man. Thus He relates God to man, and man to God, and in Him there is a reconciliation of both never known before. Neither philosophy nor science accomplishes what the Christ of the cross does for God and man. Its acceptance carries with it final salvation, and has been found to be valid the world over. It is this experience which links the creeds together, and with them the Christian centuries, and that link is a line of wonder.

The Church therefore, in the teeth of the bitterest denial, has the right to affirm that, on the basis of her experimental discovery, the Divine basis of His sacrifice is alone adequate to mark its solitariness; further, that this explains how from that awful death more has flowed than from all other vicarious sacrifices the world has known. 'In Christ the Divine has invaded man's history, personally, definitely.' (5⁷)

The scientific study of the Christian faith has been carried out more rigorously than ever in our day, but the result has been that Christ stands in a more unique place than ever, and with Him stands His cross. In that research transcendent facts have stood out which cannot be seen in the vicarious sufferings of others, save on a lesser scale. 'Something ultimate, sufficient and complete was accomplished on the cross--- God Himself, as it were, rending the heavens, and manifesting His own Love unchangeable and undimmed through rejection and betrayal, through indifference and scorn.' (6) 'Faith finds in this fact of the cross worlds more than a prophet's martyrdom. It finds the depths of God in action.' (7)

The paradox is that all such was done on human grounds, and within human history. When ~~first~~ the vision of the cross first dawned on Christ, we look in vain. We only mark His repeated references to it, the disciples' inability to accept it, and then their utmost consternation when it actually takes place. But it may well have etched itself in principle when He discerned in Nazareth an alien quality of will and love which had no place within Himself. Potentially the cross began to be shaped there, and the 'Hidden Years' but went to its completion. 'One of His earliest discoveries would be also a discovery about Himself. The love to God, the delight to do His will, the revelation to Him as Father, which were native to Him, were not as He may at first have thought, common to Himself and other men. ---In this, which alone mattered, all other ~~men~~ were different.' (8) At times His

austere will must have come up immovably against the sinful will of village priest and peasant. Calvary in all probability was Nazareth in fullest expression. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.'

In three ways the unique difference of this saving cross may be stressed: I. In its ethical reality; II. In its sacrificial reality; III. In its limitless reality.

I. The Cross is Solitary in Ethical Reality.

Jesus' cross is primarily inner and spiritual rather than outer and material. The physical aspects must always be reckoned infinitely lower than the spiritual, though we may not dis sever these two. The spiritual is always the more truly real. This is the battleground of the ages. Fundamentally the cross derives its pre-eminent qualities from those of His soul. In all phases of reality, the apparent or superficial is not the fundamental; the seeming is not the ultimately real. Most of all, the cross exemplifies this truth. Outwardly, the cross was only one of many in its day, the ghastly Roman method of executing the criminal, a death too sordid to be employed in the extreme punishment of a Roman. The cross was the last antithesis of the proud boast, 'Civis Romanus sum.' In outward nature the cross of Jesus would be as one of these. Deeper far, however, than all external identity, His cross was of supreme spiritual quality, hence the difference of cross and cross. It is just this inner difference, expressed in numberless experiences and creeds, that has entirely changed the whole history of religious thought, and has altered the whole of

civilisation. An external, loathsome shame: an inner, unspeakable splendour. This inhering quality has for ever redeemed that cross. The Fathers held that 'He reigns from the Tree', and both religion and idealism coincide. That place of utter shame is the home of the final ideal eclipsing all other ideals in appeal and saving power. It is a throne whose might out-reaches all other sovereignties. The soldiers wove His crown of acanthus thorn, but there is no crown like it; nor, for the express purpose of durability, could they have made it of nobler material. Gold and gems are as tinsel in comparison. It is the most regal that has ever graced a brow, and He bore it amid tragedy which thereby He made sublime. 'This cross cannot be measured, or weighed, or figured, for it is inner, the sorrow of the heart that breaks for sin, the pity which turns the vision of evil into a suffering that is sacrifice.'

Since Christ and His cross are inseparable, a unity indissoluble, the sinless qualities that obtain in His soul must therefore be predicated of His cross as native to it. All that He experienced, every vision, every intimation of God, of life, of men: all He thought and willed and carried through: all led Him to the cross, and there He gathered up in completion what He had wrought out in His earlier life. Jesus always stands at His cross. In some centres today they would permit Jesus to stand before them, but they cannot bear His cross. The denial of the one is similarly that of the other. Christ is not divisible. Christ and His cross are indivisible. It is the Christ as He is in Himself

who constitutes the cross what it is -Divine in the entire realm of vicarious sacrifice.

It is by no means an easy proposition for rational belief, and it only becomes possible when one remains long enough in His presence for His spirit to have its influence over the hidden sinful self. Then, upon the newly sensitive soul, there dawns the fact that the unshared characteristic of His life is a regnant holiness comparable with what the noblest prophets have predicated of God. It is as though the holy life of God, its radiance tempered because of the weakness of human vision, had become manifest. Such has been felt to be the holiness of Jesus, and it is a mighty phase of His cross. His cross is as holy as He, built within Him upon the holy foundation of His soul, its materials the sinless realities of His spirit. The Roman could erect the outer cross; only Jesus could constitute this one.

'Which of you convinceth me of sin?' was the unanswerable challenge of His life, and the race has been practically dumb in the possibility of such conviction. Alone on the page of history He stands uncondemned, and none, not even the most advanced critic of religious evolution, has been able to brand the name of Jesus with that of sinner. The suggestion of Strauss, that His indignation at the Pharisees must be reckoned sin, wins no heart. That very flame of judgment holds more ethical worth than all Strauss' work put together. The sensed distance of a sinner from His God is the distance of the best from Jesus Christ. His presence was incarnate judgment.

We must mark therefore that the holiness of Christ gave to His cross an ethical element absolutely unparalleled in the history of vicarious suffering. His whole ethical selfhood, the outstanding miracle within human experience, was given impeccably in His cross. Calvary is the passional extension of His personality. He is the moral miracle of the far-flung line of sacrificial history, the arising within vicarious human life of an altogether higher unflawed type of sacrifice.

The abstract debate centering in the two Latin questions, *Posse non peccare?* and *Non posse peccare?* is unique in this fact that it is the only debate on sinlessness made possible in our sinful world. It only arose because in Him the world of thought and religion had failed to find their own tragedy of the flawed will and the marred performance. It asked therefore whether it was a miracle due to His inability to sin, or whether He had the power to conquer sin under the most adverse conditions. In either case, He stood sinless amid a world of sinful men. They also saw that He carried that quality to His cross.

The singularly moral impressiveness of His ministry and His cross, deepened by the succeeding insight of the centuries, forbids the thought that the day will ever come when the Church will have to change its thought on this matter. 'We are raised above a world of events in time and space into the realm of values. The fact grows into a symbol; the act is transformed into a revelation.--- In Calvary it is black against white, midnight against mid-day, with no blurred edges and no twilight-

zone.' (9) This truth receives additional emphasis in that while the unqualified characteristic of man is that he is a sinner, that of Jesus is that sin never broke down the austere defences of His life, not even on Calvary, nor even came near doing so. He has compelled this testimony from many who, prior to contact with Him, were the bound captives of vice. 'In Jesus' company men became aware by degrees that He was reading their nature to the depths---His judgment could be of a dreadful severity. His holiness burned in white flame, near which foulness could not live.--- Along with this went the insight that He was worthy of trust. He was such that sinners could depend upon Him.----- Eventually they reached the inevitable conclusion that His soul had never once been touched with evil.' (10)

It is just here, in this discerned attribute of unshadowed holiness of thought and will and work that His cross reveals its uniqueness among the vicarious sacrifices for the world's peace. Jesus' cross stands out solitary in our moral vision in that in it alone there is no sign of personal failure. Hate went to its inception; malice from first to last enveloped and wrought its will upon Him; scorn and indifference had their place in nailing Him there: But all such lay outside His soul, as within He wrought out in agony the perfect sinless sacrifice. Between dream and deed there was no divergence, nor any disharmony between duty and responsive obedience.

The solidarity of the race, therefore, marks a tragic and yet glorious exception in that cross. It is an exception difficult to account for save on the Christian assumption that

in unspeakable judgment and incredible mercy 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself'. 'In Jesus men ~~met~~ for the first time were up against pure goodness. Never before had sinners confronted unflinching and perfect love; never before, accordingly, had it been possible for sin's malevolent antagonism to perfect goodness to declare itself without reserve. Hence, by its treatment of Jesus Christ man's sinfulness was exposed: its sheer evil was laid bare to the bone, reprobated, doomed, sentenced without appeal. What we are as sinners was lit up by a flash that told the whole and left nothing to be said.' (11)

Yet as nothing else, the cross lifts in profound illustration the central fact of Jesus' unbroken harmony with the love and will of God. When we think seriously about the matter, especially when the sense of our own sin is strongly upon us, we are driven to the position that such ethical perfection of self and self-offering is the primary requisite of anyone who would attempt to reconcile a sinful and sin-loving world to a holy and sin-hating God. The morally deficient and sin-stained - no matter less or greater degree - may not be the mediator between the earth in its sin and the heavens in its holiness. He who would re-link both must be aloof from the sin of man, on the one hand, and akin to the holiness of the Divine on the other. For sin is the supreme tragedy of the race, and God as sovereign holiness cannot think lightly of it. 'He is fundamentally affected by it. He is stung to the core. It does not simply try Him. It challenges His whole place in the moral world. It puts Him on trial as God. --- It is His total negation.-- It cannot

be taken up into the supreme unity. It can only be destroyed. It drives Him not merely to action, but to a passion of action, to action for His life, to action in suffering and death---. The closer the love the greater the re-action against sin, the greater the wrath.' (12). Is not this the reason for the great $\delta\epsilon\iota\lambda\ \eta\lambda\theta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ so often on His lips --- the index of the driving purpose within His heart, and which drove Him to foresee and choose the cross? It was the 'must' of unsullied holiness that must stand with God over against the sin of man, and yet hold on to man as though he meant all. It created the tension of the ages, known once for all, and which has not been repeated, and is for ever unrepeatable.

The other aspect of this exception to the solidarity of man is that of incredible mercy which is never so luminous as at the cross. It is the mercy which saves by restoring that scorned holiness to its solitary throne within the being of God and of man. When all is said, it is only God who can restore that warped balance to His world, that sovereign moral reality. 'Anselm was right in that he saw the problem for philosophic thought to be, not that of punishment, but of forgiveness; he was right also in thinking that it is insoluble unless we hold that in some way or other God "pays the bill" Himself. And that is done if God (a) shoulders the burden of the suffering that is caused by sin; (b) redeems the sinner without violation of the law of the inevitability of moral consequences - not by unmaking the act, but by re-making the man; (c) effects this in

a way which so far from impairing , actually vindicates the sanctity of the broken law. We ask, How can God do this? --- In the cross of Christ we catch, focussed in one vivid moment, the eternal quality of creative life.' (I3) How holy must that love and mercy of Jesus have been which have compelled the Church of so many millions and so many years to find there the meeting point of God and man. No other love could have borne the moral pressure. No other mercy could have linked the Holy and the unholy thus together. It was truly the world's re-creative moment. It is now the only valid redemption that the world can accept and thus realise, and it opens up a fairer dawn than any that the eyes of man have seen. It was a new hope after Grecian philosophic despair, after its plunge into scepticism. It now holds a power capable of breaking the strongest fetter binding man's soul. But it holds also an awesome commandment :- 'Go, and sin no more.' Then , as now, His holiness can tolerate no sin. 'The cross of Christ is at once a manifestation - which nothing can equal or outgo - of the Father's love to the sinful and a decisive exhibition of His hostility to sin.' (I4)

It all springs from Jesus' consciousness, and is vindicated in His cross, hence the fact, that as soon as the disciples' vision cleared with the resurrection, they saw that the cross was central to God and Jesus. It establishes for ever the stark uniqueness of the New Testament message to man. 'No religion has brought the mystery of the need for atonement or expiation to so complete, so profound, or so powerful expression as Christianity----'. For the God of the New Testament is not less holy

than the God of the Old Testament, but more holy. The interval between the creature and Him is not diminished but made absolute; the unworthiness of the profane in contrast to Him is not extenuated but enhanced. That God none the less admits access to Himself and intimacy with Himself is not a mere matter of course, it is of a grace beyond our power to apprehend, a prodigious paradox. To take this paradox out of Christianity is to make it shallow and superficial beyond recognition.' (I5) (16)

The effect, therefore, which Jesus produced upon those He met was either that of attraction or fierce antagonism. Somehow no one could remain neutral. The soul attracted to Jesus especially felt the whole force of His nature acting in sheer antagonism against his sin. Jesus loved passionately, but He never compromised on ethical issues, otherwise there would have been no cross. Had He done so, had there been the least flaw in His life or work, He would not have exerted the redeeming force He has. It was just at this ethical point that men learned most of all to know the quality of His love, the deep value of His friendship, and the wonder of His mercy. He was the only unsullied life they had ever known, one who summed up their ideal of perfect character, though He frequented their company, and laid His incomparable call upon their lives. On ethical standards He was inexorable. The stars never moved in their orbits more truly than Jesus in that of God. The ^{disciples} responded to that particularity which was unknown in them, and discovered that His moral and spiritual power, both in judgment and mercy, was able utterly to build up their flawed

characters into a new holiness undreamed before. It had not His measure, but it did share somewhat His quality.

In experience therefore they discovered the solution of the major problem of the world, viz. the persistence of the good. In the face of the entrenched might of sin, it hardly seems to have the slenderest chance of persistence. Yet it carries on. It goes down age after age in defeat, only to wake again in some elect soul who dares all for God and right. When men met Jesus, they found that solution: it is God. Good is only finally vanquished when God ceases to care about His world. The paradox of the unconquerable might of goodness is simply the cross. When the solitary holy exception appeared in the world, it could not bear His goodness, termed it evil, spoke of Him as in league with the powers of evil, falsified charges against Him, broke every legal and ethical law possible in order to extort the death sentence from the ruling body upon Him, and had Him put to death as One utterly unfit to live. Yet that One is now the very summation of the world's supreme ideal of positive goodness, and there is no one even faintly comparable. From that trial in which He was delivered to death, no one emerged unscathed save Him. Such is the clear verdict of history. It has since become the Gospel to the world that thus dealt with Him, since it is in the fitness of God that 'He maketh the wrath of man to praise Him'. But it was first of all the Gospel to those who knew their deepest hopes quenched in His death. It has never therefore been an easy Gospel, one readily credible. But when He rose from out His grave, that

crucified and buried but unconquerable goodness rose with Him, and God was justified as never before. Similarly were justified all that innumerable host who have believed 'right is right, and right the day must win'. 'We take the good for granted, and only ask the reason for the evil. Yet surely what we ought to ask for is an explanation of the world as a whole.----- Here, as it seems to me, is the point where any form of atheism breaks down. The atheist has an explanation of the evil in the world, but he has no sufficient explanation of the good.' (17)

Jesus then vindicates Himself in experience. His work is that of cosmic redemption, and there is an ageless tonic in His forgiveness. Worship now centres In God whom Jesus has revealed in His cross. It is the easier, because it is the deeper way to approach God through Jesus than through Nature. As a further result, Jesus makes Nature far more intelligible to us than ever before. There was a veil over her until Jesus came. It is the most wonderful contribution religion has ever known, and is another reason why Jesus stands alone. Nature dwarfs all her many gifted sons; but only One has ever dwarfed Nature, thereby to heighten her meaning, and that One is Jesus. 'If His personality represents a new stage in man's consciousness of God, it is a stage which closes with Himself. He has been no more reproduced in Christendom than He was anticipated in Judaism. There is a double break in the continuity. Naturalistic evolution fails to account for Him alike in connection with what precedes and what follows Him, and it is the latter failure which is fatal.' (20)

Is it at all wonderful then that we now know no God save as He is revealed in Jesus. In line with Johannine thought, Jesus is not only the way to the Father, He is also the truth and the life. The transcendent point is that the soul is not robbed of any divine reality, is never on a false road when he follows Jesus, nor is the glory of God dimmed. The paradox is that God is more truly and more deeply worshipped when we turn towards Christ. For Christian men this is normal for faith, and it is the glory of their lives as it becomes their peace.

Now all such reality Jesus bore to His cross, forever making it the vital centre for life and theology. His life made His cross what it has since been, the greatest transaction in the spiritual universe. Jesus has become the world's redeemer on the ground that neither in self nor sacrifice could sin be found. It wrought no lure over Him, never occasioned remorse in His life, never left its brand upon mind or soul. To the last moment of His life, He abode in the presence and possession of the Father, and maintained Himself unmoved, though the moral battles He fought had carried off their feet even the noblest of every age.

This difference of ethical reality renders the cross of Jesus unique amid all the vicarious sacrifices which God in mercy for His people has laid upon the finest of His servants. Yet when His Son entered upon that same vocation, the Father wrought a work through Him for which the others were inadequate, and towards which their fondest hopes ever turned. 'This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' The cross compels our awe, but it defies our every expression of its wonder. 'The Church

takes her moral bearings there.---She reconstructs man's conscience from there,till it prick the consciousness and make the wonder of the forgiven.'(21) 'In applying to the cross of Christ the category "holy" Christian religious feeling has given birth to a religious intuition profounder and more vital than any to be found in the whole history of religion.'(22)

II. THE Cross is Solitary in Sacrificial Reality.

There seems to be an increasing significance in sacrifice as life moved onward and upward in thought and feeling and worship. There is the well-known sacrifice of brute for brute, the mother for its cub, the male for its mate; but it is a loftier plane when we see early man contending against the odds of nature, and for the sake of some one relatively dear to him suffering the worst that that one might persist. We are far beyond that plane when the ethically empowered man, the man with the intuition of God, feels that for truth's sake life may well be bartered; that God and the ideal and love have a right over him beyond any right he may discover within himself. This tide of vicarious sacrifice has ennobled life beyond description, and has stood out in many a dark and savage hour for qualities unutterable in their final values. Sacrifice, however, had not touched its peak of vision and achievement until there emerged Christ bearing His cross. 'Behold the Man ! ' When that hour dawned, there came the intimation that it marked the ne plus ultra of all, even cosmic, sacrifice.

Presumably from earliest days sacrifices had been more or less the normal approach of man to the Eternal. The origin may have been a sense of aloofness, but such cannot have been the vital fact. It is fairly evident that perennially man has known a moving sense of profound disquiet, a dimly realised intuition that matters were not as they should be concerning man and deity. Especially this was so as the race moved on through the years. Sinnerhood was deepened not created by the advent of Jesus. He has become the new criterion of conscience, but from the dawn of history at least the fact of sin has been accepted, thus paving the way for the cult of sacrifice. Estrangement from the Divine has undoubtedly been a distinct phase of man's consciousness world-wide and age-long, to such an extent that he has often given 'the fruit of his body for the sin of his soul'. As far back as the dawn of history, we find man building his altar, a mute appeal to the gods for care and mercy. Prostrate in the dust, or standing with hands outstretched to the over-arching heavens, the worshipper has made his oblation to the dimly-imaged, imperfectly-divined Eternal. Great desires, sublime in their aspiration, have come into being thus, while at times his sacrifices have been terrible in the extreme. This trait of desired propitiation is as universal as man, and is the one attribute he cannot share with the brute. Man alone builds the altar; he alone can worship; he alone halts on his way to meet his God. While comparative psychology has shown us the many links that bind us to the creature, in this respect of worship, the gulf between

the brute and the human has not been lessened by a hair's breadth. Only man can see himself a sinner; only man can attempt the atonement for his sin.

The methods of approach are not all of the same type nor on the same plane of nature, but differ with the mentality and spirituality of the varying races. Some are revoltingly degraded as among the animistic peoples, while others have a certain nobility. The assumed nature of God to a great measure will determine the moral or non-moral approach to Him. The sacrifices of the Jew when coupled with prophetic thought are among the noblest known, embodying as the loftiest do a profound ethic. Sometimes this nobler note has been better served when the sacrifice has been laid aside. In general it is true that 'as is the God so is his worshipper', and thus the sacrifice offered. Where a race is discovered with the conception of the Supreme as one holy, righteous, immutable in nature and purpose, there the greater stress will be found laid upon purity and perfection of gift and giver. The Jew has been the moralist among sacrificing peoples from the hour when he rose to the ethicised conception of God.. 'Be ye holy as I am holy' was burnt into his soul.

It was by more^{than} mere accident of birth, therefore, that Jesus took His rise among this people. There was a fitness in such as to constitute in itself the quality of the revelation. It would have been greatly different had Jesus come of Grecian stock with its spiritual legacy of gods and goddesses with their qualified and shadowed morality.

On that ethical stock, so to speak, Jesus grafted His own incomparable sacrifice. If the human race in its sacrificial pilgrimage came thus far, then it is not difficult to see that Jesus is the coronation of them all. The sacrifice of the cross, with its awe-inspiring and fathomless sublimity may therefore be seen as the fruition and culmination of the noblest of these soul-oblations. But the difference is epochal and unrepeatable. Again, as earlier, we have to mark that the difference in sacrificial value, is the difference of Jesus Himself. That thought is deepened when we remember that the New Testament writers, to whose records we owe all our light on the cross, were drenched to the soul at first by the shame and horror of the cross. Yet, in the light of the resurrection, they place it unequivocally central to God in meaning and power. 'Their common position is that this sacrifice of Christ was a reality in a sense that older sacrifices were not, and that its efficacy is due to the personality of Christ.' (23)

Uniquely solitary is that cross. Similarities there are, contributions are also made by other orders of sacrifices: there are approximations to it from many unlikely quarters: but when the candid student of religious experience realises and values all these in their utmost value, how austere does the cross move up to occupy its own place. It is like Joseph's tomb in which they laid His body - none had occupied it until He was laid there. There is something irresistible in that movement of the cross, revealing a difference, a gulf dividing it from all

others. The New Testament reveals that difference: it is the felt distinction between God and His creature. That explains the heights and depths of the descriptions given to the cross in the Gospels and Epistles. There is more to be said than can ever be said. It is at once clear to all these writers that no purely human sacrifice can for a moment rank alongside the cross. We are at an order that is transcendent, of which the world's noblest and purest sacrifice is altogether inadequate to symbolise and set forth its truth and native sublimity. The Lord and His cross, while gathering up all the sacrifices made for God, are the loneliest realities in creation. 'He became the finished Saviour only in the finished salvation.---It was the Christ who was made sin for them in the cross that became for them God reconciling the world unto Himself.--- It was then that He finished the universal task latent in their national religion, and dealt once for all with the sin of the world.' (25)

Thus it is that we can read, in the white light of that cross, whatever reality there was in those earlier sacrifices, just as within a higher dimension it is possible to read the content of the less. Sometimes it is the only way in which the lesser can be read; until the higher takes it up, its meaning is opaque. What if only in Jesus we can understand why man is incurably religious? God the Father meant him to wait with longing until Jesus come.

Among the many factors that bespeak this solitariness of Jesus and His cross, four may be noted:

i. The first is the love which He manifested prior to and in the act of the cross.

It comes now to men as the very love of God. The cross is simultaneously, therefore, a judgment and a grace, a condemnation and a mercy. It is the most searching judgment known on earth, the parallel of which can only be that of 'the Great White Throne.' It is a grace that can dare to see the worst, follow it up, live in its presence, condemn it utterly, and then give the utmost to break its enslaving power. God's judgment in the cross, in essence, condemns guilty man to salvation !

If Jesus would make man a saint, then first of all He must be merciless with his sin. If for this end the greatest thing in Jesus was a holy love, then is the cross the sphere of its greatest revelation. No one ever loved the soul as Jesus, and therefore no one ever visited upon it such a judgment as His. The easiest thing for Jesus to do on earth was to forgive a sinner because He loved the man; but never was there such a hard task as this to Him, because He hated sin as only God can hate. Thus the cross is the ethical tonic which keeps the world on its way. 'We are only just escaping from the modern and sentimental idea of love which found no difficulty placed by the holy law of God's nature in His way of forgiveness. It is an immoral love which has no hesitation about mercy. There are conditions to be met which reside, not in man, but in the very nature of God Himself-----. The key to the whole situation is --- that --- man would be better assured, if he were shattered on the inviolability of this holy law than if for his

mere happy existence it were ignored.' (26)

. By none are we so judged as by a pure love. Love of the order of Jesus is the most uncompromising in the universe. In the case of Jesus, the august purity and passion of His heart showed the race how near it stood in kinship to God, yet how far it had wandered from Him. To note this quality of love is to find the greatest witness that our origin is other than of mere time and space. This splendour of love speaks of our forfeited heritage. It is therefore our keenest condemnation. Unlike ourselves, Jesus never enthroned the beast where God should be. The absence of such immaculate^{love} as living principle is life's greatest tragedy. Its memory, as the touch of home, is the most biting throb of pain that can visit the prodigal's heart.

That love of Jesus is the witness to the forgiveness of God. Can and will God forgive? It is the master-question for all time. All there is to do is to point that one to Christ, and let him see His face, and hear Him speak, and see Him live, and watch Him die. Then does He become the love of God humanised and suffering before our amazed and wondering gaze. But - and it is as profound as any one must of necessity hear - nowhere else in this often ambiguous world is it so clear, if it be clear at all. 'Nature may indeed reveal a power indefinitely great and a wisdom indefinitely wise, but as regards forgiveness it is silent. That is a transcendent word; sun, moon, and stars cannot utter it, nor can earth and sea. It is in history, and only there, that the infinite love of the Eternal is put within our reach---- In one unique tract of reality the veil upon His working grows diaphanous, and we behold

His very heart.-- Only in the fact of Jesus does a basis for religion exist not only for man, but given by God Himself.' (27)

It has often been emphasised that through the sacrifice of Jesus the wrath of an angry God has been placated, rather than the wonderful truth that in that cross the Father came seeking, through unutterable travail, the sinful soul of His child. To set Jesus as love, over against the Father as wrath, is a terrible travesty of what is in itself a saving truth, viz. that the holy love of God, both for His own sake and for man's, is in deadly opposition to sin. 'It is love for sinners of a God who is above all things holy, whose holiness makes sin damnable as sin and love active as grace.'

(28)

It is easily seen why in that crucifixion the sin of all the ages summed itself up in sheer malignity and hate - hate of God and of goodness. The Christ there presented the whole love and goodwill of the Eternal Heart, at once a condemnation of sin and redemption from it, and all that man was bent on doing was to out-sin his soul in bitter hate and biting scorn, and merciless cruelty. Unveiled under human conditions, the sole thing that man could do was to send it to agony and utter shame and death. The whole dispensation of God was thereby involved, with the result that sin was driven to its apocalyptical point. In that act, as the culmination of the ageless sin that had laid waste the face of the earth, sin placarded itself as the final atheist, and as the enemy of man's nature and eternal well-being. For such as Jesus, the world of that authority could offer nothing except a cross of shame, a crown of thorn. 'We will not have this Man to reign over us.'

The Christian has realised that here the Father suffered with

the Son. The transcendence of the Eternal became the immanence of the Cross. It is august and tragic truth that in Him the Father came seeking man amid his evil ways, and could only redeem him from such wrong by Himself becoming outcast. Can it be accepted? If so, then there is nothing on earth or in the heavens comparable. It is the final glory; it is the ultimate mercy; it is the hope for man beyond and above every dream that has ever lived within his heart. If God can do this, [in Pauline thought, can 'empty' His sovereignty to the extreme degree that He share our dependence upon time and space; and, in such a condition, can 'bear the cross'], He is achieving a sovereignty over His world and over His lost children beyond even that which is native to Him as God. In Jesus His unique Son He has done so, or religion has no assurance left. 'What difference did this new relation make to Him as God? --- In -- Nature there is nothing to experience. In these facts a finite content unfolds itself fully and in all its beauty to the Divine mind which willed it all. But in man is it so? Here all the reality of creaturehood is gathered up with the infinitude of a subjective, rational, moral, conscious experience; dependence - or creaturehood - is felt, thought, realised through all the ranges of human activity in a unique and supreme manner. There is something here that not even a Divine observer possesses or realises by observing. His sympathy is wondrous, but yet it is sympathy across a gulf. His deep, infinitely deep, observation of man's experience can never be a substitute or full equivalent for that experience. To see and understand dependence is not the same as

to live by its virtue; to create, trace, and watch growth is not the same as to grow; to measure the sorrow of that other creaturely heart even to its last quiver of subtlest and deepest thrill of pain is yet not to know it as the subject of it. Even to taste God's pain is different from tasting man's. Now the Incarnation means that there is this one final fact not yet made His own which would only become His own in one way. Can He cross the gulf? Can He, the Eternal, Divine Will, who has tasted what it is to be a creator, and to rule, to inform, to bear the conscious burden of the universe of dependent beings, can He yet put our peculiar cup to His lips and taste even that human dependence - itself - on the human side of it - in its very essence? The Babe of Bethlehem, the tired Physician of Galilee, the praying Servant of Yahweh, the Man on the Cross with a broken heart - what if all that means that He has tasted what it is to be a man? And, in love!

(29)

Paul must be right. There is the kenotic principle within the sovereignty of God, and not only in that form of it now forever associated with the Incarnation. Possibly here we are near the solution of the vexed problem of the Trinity, ~~is~~ the self-submergence, so to speak, of each Person of the Godhead in the other. It may prove also a light flung out across nature. Certainly in the case of man and his freedom and his sin, it seems that we have the alternatives of kenoticism or pantheism, so linked is everything with God, yet so free each within its own habitat.

It is Jesus who has compelled the soul to cease questioning the potential crossing of the eternal gulf, and for the Christian

to enunciate with all the high powers of his spiritual perception that it has actually taken place. We are here far beyond the myths of the ancient years. Olympus is not even the foothills leading on to Calvary. Far more distant than monotheistic Yahweh of Israel is from Zeus of Greece, is the New Testament biography of Jesus from such myths. 'The Word became flesh and ~~was~~ beheld His glory.' It is not infrequently said that the best is too good for this world. Such despair is frank paganism. Jesus is God's monograph of unfathomable, sacrificial love. 'He who was rich for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.' 'What is man that Thou art mindful of him?' asks the Psalmist. 'For whom Christ died', is now the only fit and adequate answer. It is the pledge as well as the promise of our final redemption.

The world can hardly vision the just measure of that word 'died' in connection with God. As it stands, it is the sheerest paradox. We can account for it only with difficulty, and only then if the Holy Spirit be alongside our mind and heart to be its interpreter. More often than not, we gloss over the tremendous reality it contains. We are naturally Arians by birth and outlook and training; we are Athanasians only by Grace. We need a new calculus, than comes ordinarily to our mind, when we are in this multi-dimensional realm of Jesus and His Calvary. That God should take the cup of death to His lips and drain it in our stead, is inexplicable. Nor do we escape the difficulty when we speak of the Son drinking that cup. Are we not driven back to

Jesus' prayer stance: 'I thank Thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' The New Testament presents the fact as the 'apologia' of Christ's purpose on earth, for the sake of which death, the Incarnation took place, the value of which infinitely transcends even His teaching and miracles. 'If He had not died for us in love, He would have done nothing at all.--- On the cross the Sinless Son of God, in love to man and in obedience to the Father, entered submissively into the tragic experience in which sinful men realise all that sin means. He tasted death for every man. The last and deepest thing we can say about His relation to our sins is that He died for them, that He bore them in His own body on the tree.' (30)

But what a judgment on sin is that death ! When we register upon our heart the condemnation of that love, though we may writhe in bitter self-judgment, yet we are climbing the hills of the Eternal Holiness. It will take the whole and the best of this life as well as the next to climb such heights, but the touch of Calvary is on us and we shall arrive. Our final destiny may well be left in His Pierced Palm. Having crossed the gulf to save us, He will not readily let us go. Death will meet us on the way, but He has died our deeper, second death, thus death can only introduce us to Him on the Other Side, the aftermath of the glory of having known Him here. Since He has exhausted the sin-element of death, having become its Lord as well as ours, He makes it His dark messenger to beckon us to our place where 'there is no death'.

It is here that the unsophisticated Christian often breaks down within 'the secret place'. That that Love should drink the dregs of holy wrath against sin, should experience the 'taste' of such death in all its unrelieved horror, calls upon every emotion of which the heart is capable. There is no comparable emotion. The love of Jesus is almost as unbearable as it is unspeakable. No wonder the heart of pilgrim Christian humanity has almost broken down beneath the weight of such cruelly ecstatic joy. It shares the experience of Him 'who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross'. For humanity was a scarred, broken thing, but He came and lifted it up unto the redeemed values of His own nature and destiny, and it is unforgettable. He always seemed to have a passion for mired, broken things ! The ancient gods thought nothing of broken things. They loosed the 'Furies' at such, though they themselves often put erring man on wrong roads - were they not gods, and the gods could do no wrong ! Often they broke into ironical laughter. What a transformation and transmutation Jesus wrought. It is the only revelation that leaves no residuum for the worshipper to blush over. The God of Jesus must 'gather up the fragments that remain that nothing be lost'. Yet who could even have guessed it, had not the sacrificial love of Jesus broken in upon our world with its broken shards of dream and hope and pain ? None. The love of Jesus - that overplus of pity coupled with power - is a more beautiful thing to an infinite degree than even beauty-loving Greece ever knew. Socrates was near it, and one thinks he waited until in the spirit of God Jesus came. Now we better

understand the immanence of the Transcendent - He whispered to Socrates more than that great and good man knew.

Thus the love of Jesus is imperishable; it abides untarnished, its light undimmed down the long years. It runs forever beyond the genius of poet or artist or sculptor. It is the only perfect expression of the hidden God. It is august yet tender; holy yet never aloof; self-contained but never self-righteous; inexorable yet intent only to save a world bent on roads of darkness and pain. Nothing else we know now could have satisfied the creative love of God or met the deep need of man; nothing else could have broken the fetters off man's soul without breaking man in so doing. This was the reason, the New Testament affirms, why Jesus chose the way of the cross.

It is but truth then that we acknowledge in the love of Christ, as gathered up redeemingly in His cross, a solitariness not known in any other. Love in a measure was glimpsed in God before Jesus came, of which Prophet and Psalmist have left us manifold yet shadowed witness; but neither in assurance nor in pristine clarity of sacrifice as seen in Jesus. In the Fatherhood of God as Jesus has given it content, and in the Saviourhood of Jesus Himself, there are heights and depths, there is a holiness as well as a radiance, never even glimpsed before. In Him there is love as God wished it to be. His love is the ideal reality, and has been the spring of His redemptive sacrifice. His love became His vision, at the heart of which He sees the world won back for God. 'He walked down a street, and the scene of misery

and sin came upon Him with pressure;-- -that pressure is with Him night and day -- it becomes intercession, and that grows into inspiration--- .He was identified with the world's sin-- -- It becomes with Him an imperative necessity to effect man's reconciliation with God ----.To understand Him, we ---- must be with Him---.But whether you understand Him, or whether you don't, if you love Him you are glad He chose a cross and you are glad you are one of His people.'(31)

One hardly needs to say that we must belong wholly to His world of life and of God, therefore of purpose. That we do not so belong, our heart is often dark witness. That we must yet, is the implicit affirmation of such a Gospel. Jesus came to bring us back to God, and it cost Him His all. It must not be forgotten, nor must its regality be sloughed over. He came with a love so supernal, yet so surrendering, so all-sufficient for the most lost and desperate of men, that Revelation vi.3 is a fit picture -
 ὁ ἀρχαῖος ὡς ἑστὼς ὡς ἑστὼς ὡς ἑστὼς . It is the Father's last, deepest witness of His love for man, hence the reason why the cross eludes any attempted final analysis of its meaning; why it never ^{gives} itself wholly to the captivity either of mind or heart, of phrase or emotion. Every scholar who has sought with all his powers to master, at last falls back spent; he never finishes his work on the atonement. The reason is not difficult: only the other side of death is the vision ever clear enough, or the self sufficiently surrendered. That is why the cross in experience is always greater than its theology; just as Christ is greater than

Christology, however erudite such may be. The book is not written that can bind Him within its covers. The cross is Jesus in sacrificial extension, and its dimensions are immeasurable. No wonder some of the greatest saints have worn down stone floors with pressure of bare knees because His love has thrown its light redeemingly upon their sin.

ii. A second factor making for the solitariness of the cross is the Vicarious Penitence of Jesus.

There have been not a few critically strong denials of the position of McLeod Campbell and his school of thought, but in spite of all that can be said to the contrary, surely there is a great deal of heart satisfaction and mental rest and spiritual strength in seeing Jesus as the divinely ideal penitent, vicariously identifying Himself with us in our sin and its confession, leading on to its denial. 'In Christ we make the most complete assent to God's condemnation of sin.' (32) Is there not great truth in the contention that a perfect repentance or penitence within the race, especially by its sinless Head, would be a valid phase of cosmic and individual atonement? Can we not believe that in the hour when a man takes that penitence as the ground of his confession to God, that man enters upon reconciliation with God? If so, McLeod Campbell's theory stands, only needing other visions of the cross as complementaries, since no one theory can exhaust the glory of that offering.

Man as sinful is incapable of manifesting this perfect response to the Divine holiness, his sin being his insuperable

hindrance in that it blinds him to the deadly nature of his sin, and similarly the unquenchable quality of Divine antagonism to it. That sin also disables man from functioning within the sensitively holy realm of God's nature, the expression of which is the perennial ethical law. But Jesus, the Sinless One, voiced and wrought for man what he could not do for himself. Jesus achieved for the race what even its martyrs could not effect. The highest appeal to the tribunal of God cannot be made by the sinful heart. A Moses would have had his name blotted out of God's 'Book', if his people go unredeemed; but Jesus blots out Himself on a sinless cross, and does what a Moses can never do. Jesus is the tongue of our mute soul; Jesus is our inability made able to the infinite degree; He redeems where sin has done its worst. He is the ideal penitent who yet knew no sin; He repents for us who cannot achieve a full repentance ourselves.

Against this view it is said that penitence is only really possible to a sinner; hence, on the score of His sinlessness, needing no repentance, Jesus cannot exercise such a function. It is on a par with the thought that God cannot possibly become man. On a priori grounds such is irrefutable. Yet 'the Word became flesh'. On a priori grounds it is incredible that Jesus should repent for man and embody his penitence. Yet every page of the New Testament shows Him doing so, and it is all summed up in His cross. The principle is integral within the Christ that what we must do as wilful sinners, that Jesus does vastly beyond us. There is a perfect penitence in Jesus to which even our profoundest

longing is the meanest approximation. Within the lone Godhead He appeals for the lost soul of guilty man.

But it is not a word we would stress: it is the attitude, the appeal, the redeeming activity of Jesus that is in question. Perhaps the better term, then, would be not penitence or repentance but sorrow, and such laid by the infinite Son upon the heart of the infinite Father. Sin makes for sorrow; is sorrow; it may be, final, irrevocable sorrow. There is an awful destiny in sin; and its tax on God no one may compute. That being so, in any valid atonement there must of necessity be a sorrow of such poignancy that its measure must lie somewhere within the Divine. Sin may, as it does, create sorrow, but not a sorrow adequate for the holiness of which it is the final scorn. The sinner, fronting His outraged God, may yearn to command a sorrow that shall requite that deep hurt to the Divine Nature, that outrage to His Holiness; but where and how can he compass such? His very sin is his non-ability. Yet when we see the Christ sorrow - what does the inner spirit of us seem to hear? It is the Calvary-muted cry - 'Is there any sorrow like unto My sorrow?' Is there? Then where? Who can sorrow as Christ? At His sin-barred heart there grew and gathered a sorrow so hurt, so scarred, so loving, and thus so sacrificial and breaking and overwhelming, that by whatever term we designate it, there we must behold the core of all His redemptive vision and work. 'There is no question of placation, but there is of expiation, of owning the holiest law by the holiest sacrifice and the humblest grief.' (33) With eyes that

sin had not filmed, He beheld the wreckage of man's life, the ruin of God's fairest creation, and as He saw as none other, so as none other He took a pain to His heart that baffles vision or word, and is intelligible in all its fulness to God alone; to God alone, because it is the agony of the Eternal Godhead.

We touch here, again, unmistakable solitariness, since not the sinful but the Sinless may plumb the deeps of sin's pain. It is God in Christ who thus suffers, and who must yet suffer, suffer as long as sin lasts and secures its victim. That eternal travail on man's account only the Son fully knew, in which the Son also visioned His own mead of spiritual agony, His own cross. Without equivocation, it must be fearlessly asserted that pain does come home to the heart of Deity. The Divine is not impassible, else in depth of nature He would rank lower than Jesus of Nazareth, even on the human scale, and ^even lower than those elect souls in every generation who have mourned over the sin of others, and concerning their own. This Divine travail is an intuition of the Christian heart, however hard it may be to rationalise its thought. Certainly it has not the proof that lesser realities seem to have, but, on the other hand, once it is clearly seen it is inescapable, and shines by its own light, itself its own demonstration. In Jesus, through whom alone it has been given to the conceptual world, it is as noonday clear. In Him we mark an agony over sin and its tragedy that has given to the moral world practically a new conscience, we might almost say, a new soul. It is all there, plain to mind and heart, that only the ethically

scarred and thus insensitive can deny. The burning-point of Galvary, as of a diamond heated to its utmost bearing, has engraven it upon the soul of the world. There has never been such sorrow over human loss as His, none so holy, so pure, so white-flamed as His. No one has been so fouled by its reek and stench and utter shame as was He, no one so overborne by its curse and evil, yet His sorrow is whiter than the lily and purer than mountain snow. The least one can say, and which must be abidingly said, ^{is} that in such sorrow both God and man witnessed to what sin can mean and perpetrate. When conscience is awake, and its slender wind-blown taper is alight, man registers that it is he who has wrought such curse and travail, in which hour he is nearer God and His Christ than in blither days. Thus along the road of repentance or sorrow the Son of Man trod, the soul of the race moves on its way to God.

If we can but see this, then we are aware that within God, though on the incarnate level, Jesus was lifting up the human heart to the Father. One immediately grants the whole sheer paradox of it, but in Jesus' presence we are never delivered from but rather unto paradox. Jesus is utterly paradoxical whenever we meet Him. As His people, regenerate and redeemed within His sacrifice, whose every hope is grounded upon such transcendent redemption, we must be prepared, if need be, to go outside every 'camp' in frank acknowledgment of our utter inability to explicate Him other than within the final Divine. For us men, and for our salvation, Jesus is God inbreaking within the human order, not to demonstrate His Deity but to sacrifice His all. Utter, amazing paradox, and it is only the Holy Spirit who can help

us to believe. Moreover we hold such faith in the sphere of perennial peril. It is never easy, though it is always safe to commit one's all to Jesus of Nazareth. Faith affirms, despite the gibe of the world, that the Godhead in Jesus confessed to the Godhead in the Father the sin of the world, and this confession is made real to us by the Godhead mediated in the Holy Spirit.

'The Christian thought is that Christ carried the horror and curse of sin, amid fearful loneliness and agony, into the presence of God by confession full and complete; where the sin, being thus exposed, was purged and burned away in the forgiving love of God who is a consuming fire----The thing no man could do, else the God-Man had not come to do it on our behalf.' (34)

Possibly here we have the sovereign key to all questions of substitution. It is the intercession of Suffering and Doing and Confessing; ~~an~~ historic confession, in one sense; timeless in the deeper sense, since it was founded on and grounded in the Son who came from out the bosom of the Father. He who came from out the Throne, is now before it, and the plea for man is on His lips. (35, 36) That sorrow of God, mediated through One like ourselves, as though from within ourselves, is redemption itself. It is no mean thing, nor casual principle, nor human attempt at atonement. The Elder Brother of the race, Himself grounded within the eternal holiness, presents His cross to the Eternal Conscience. He makes a holy supplication based on common sorrow, though not an equivalent sorrow, for His human kith and kin engulfed in their sin and its aftermath and waste of pain. It is sheer perfection of offering, a repentance so lone and solitary/amid the motives of

man's heart, that we have no fit calculus. Jesus pleads ! It is the most unearthly ,the most vicarious reality in the creation of God, itself uncreated. His hurt and His heart, His sorrow and His sympathy, His light and His darkness of desolation, His thorns and His grave, His cross and His crown - they all call for man at the bar of God, and their last word to God is His first word of mercy to man. The fact is as unrepeatable as it is indefinable, and words are poor and faith is mean to express its truth. Yet, here again, the paradox is that what Christ wrought, He wrought first and last for God. Jesus loved man in God, apart from whom He had no regard. In the hour when He gave His all for man, it was to that same Father He spoke first as last, finally to cry with a loud voice: 'Into Thy hands I commend my spirit.' 'What most engrossed Jesus, even at the close, He said least of. It was not man's need of Him, nor His action on man. It was God's need of Him; God's real need of His sorrow, God's holy will for His obedience, the action of His cross on the holiness of God. For Christ the first effect of His cross was not on man, else He would have had more to say. It was on the Father.' (37) And yet He did for man what must never be forgotten. In the cry, in which all the availing prayer of His life was summed up, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do', He is actually linking eternally the race and the Father together, His own broken body and pierced hands being link and bond. Surely, not even the heavens themselves could register a deeper and more efficacious sorrow than this, nor earth know its like.

iii. A third factor revealing His solitary position in the sphere of redemption is that of faith.

This has not been marked by Campbell on the same scale, and when it is recognised, and laid alongside his own major contribution, it renders his theory less inadequate. In the supreme sense, Christian faith affirms that Jesus is the object of our faith, and in that sense must be seen as standing with God over against man as man, just as in the Apocalypse He is presented as in the midst of the throne. He is consequently the Redeemer to whom the hearts of His people turn, and in whose name worship is rendered.

On the other hand, just as in Jesus we see the perfect Penitent, so also we may hold Him to embody the perfect spirit of faith. Jesus' faith in God from the earliest years, as disclosed in the beautiful Temple incident, right on to the cross, is as dynamic a feature of His atoning work as any other may be. In fact, have we any right to pit one phase of that inimitable life and work against another? His faith, then, is seen as sharing in the totality of His passion as He reclaimed the world to God.

Disdaining every safe road, He took the hard and narrow and perilous razor-edge way of the will of God, similar to that to which He calls His disciples. He also 'endured as, seeing Him who is invisible'. He implicated faith in any given situation, launching out on God's will even when there seemed no ground ahead of His feet. Stepping out thus in faith, He found the solid rock of God's promise beneath.

The sacrificial quality of that faith is somewhat seen in the shadows and fears which the Evangelists depict as gathering

about the mind and heart of the disciples. We read (Matt.xvii.22) that they were hurt to the very heart (ἐλυτῆθησαν εἰς τὴν καρδίαν. Luke ch.ix.45) has it that they feared to ask Him the meaning of their alarm. There is that in His mien and purpose that struck terror to their heart. That emotion reveals the intensity and quality of Jesus' 'must', a necessity grounded in His faith. Similarly, we find the like approximation to alarm in Mk.x.32; Matt.xx.17; and Lk.18.31. Jesus moves ahead of them, an impatient spirit surging to undergo His baptism of blood. It is the beginning of the end. Faith has steeled Him to all that may occur. He is conscious only that His supreme task awaits Him yonder at the heart of His nation. His soul is granitic in its sternness, more austere unbending than at any other time, moved unto the depths even to the blanching of His features, the pallor of a purpose that drew fiercely upon His physical reserves. 'And they were dismayed - awestruck - and following Him they feared,' (ἐθαμβήθησαν καὶ ἑξοβήθησαν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐφοβήθησαν αὐτόν). The sight of that Face unnerved them: it held an immediate future that struck panic to their heart. Yet they followed! It is the redemption of their failing discipleship, though out of it, after their debacle, He will create unconquerable apostleship - out of such obedience amid fear. When later on they were to know what now they could not, they would go out across the world and in His name build the kingdom of faith, the kingdom of God. Jesus' faith therefore was creative.

That faith of Jesus in the love and purpose of God must be seen as a phase of His expiation - one among other essentials.

To save the sheep from the fang of the wolf, the Shepherd must lay down His life. But it is no mere incident in the daily routine. It is no mere conjecture, either. He lays it down in faith, in the will-to-love and the will-to-obey and the will-to-redeem, as the Father had laid it upon His spirit. In so doing Jesus fulfils one of the profoundest instincts with which God has dowered the race, viz. the passion of love and faith to expiate the wrong of its own. ~~A~~Awesome expiatory faith, everywhere rooted in the highest and lowest life, finding its operation throughout all time and place, and summed up transcendently in Jesus. 'Expiation is a cosmic fact as fundamental as the law of gravitation-----'.-----
Wherever love lays itself alongside wretchedness to alleviate and rescue, wherever innocence bears in agony the shame of others' guilt --- this passion flower of the spirit-world has come to bloom. The crimson strands of vicarious sacrifice are woven into the very tissue and texture of creation.' (39)

Jesus' faith is as unmistakeable as His love. If one quality of His life is to be accorded first rank in the order of His soul, then it is this faith in God, and in men through God. In His life, as in His death, it shone out too clear to be missed. If we ask for a commentary on this as 'text', His last cry on the cross is incomparable. In the Gospels as well as in the Epistles it is attributed to Jesus - in Hebrews as 'the pioneer and consummator of faith' - faith simply summed up in Him. It is of a filial quality, unwavering; there are no 'tides' in its life. It only becomes more impressive as the gorge of human rejection narrows to the dimensions of the cross.

At the heart of whatever expiation we discover in the work of Jesus, there we must see this quality of faith. In that perfection of faith, He atoned for the faithlessness of men, and potentially then, as actually since, He has reconciled man to a living faith in God. Such faith even is the very basis for His cosmic repentance for human sinnerhood, and neither must be omitted from our vision of the totality of Jesus. In the might of His faith He endured His cross. It is faith without limit, as it is without flaw; it is intact whenever we see Jesus. He is faith's full and perfect incarnation, as He is its reclamation in the hearts of all who are thrilled to Him. It lies at the heart of His sorrow for sin; it is integral in His obedience unto death; it is deeper in Him than sin or hate or death can run - His faith is the Alpha and Omega of the victory of God. He was so sure of God, that He knew He would not die in vain. 'When His hands closed in agony round the nails, they crushed the power of evil, and the victory of the Master may be the victory of the servant.' (40) He re-created faith in a faithless world, when He redeemed man to his God.

iv. The Fourth Factor attesting solitariness in sacrificial reality is that of perfect obedience to the whole law of God.

In this, as in so many other matters of the soul, Jesus stands alone. The obedience Jesus rendered to the Father was utterly unflawed, a spiritual reality perfect in its order. This is not found even in the best of men. There is ethical failure in the most upright; spiritual inadequacy is noted in the most

devoted , but Jesus is incomparable in the realm of obedience. 'He did not yield a precisely measured obedience, He ate and drank the will of God.-- There was the impression everywhere of urgency and speed and willingness.-- So it was in His suffering. He gave Himself up with passion to His Passion.' (4I)

In a valid atonement for sin, there must necessarily be the complete reversal of sin's disobedience. Sin is anarchy within the realm of God, the refusal to acknowledge the Divine will as essential to life and supreme over it. The principle of free and frank obedience must therefore be re-integrated within human life as the ultimate law. It must be the work of one within the human order, aloof from its alienation and taint, who can swing on the axis of His personality the whole world of life round to a new facing of God , leading to a fresh surrender to His nature and purpose. Jesus has done so, and in a measure that has changed history, and in addition has charged it with His message.

Jesus' perfect response to the Father's will, consequently, is a reparative obedience. He has rendered justice to the eternal holiness in so doing, the first charge upon His own spirit as the Redeemer. Jesus never began first with man, but with God, hence the abiding character of His redemptive ministry. That which is done in God stands above the flux of history, though it constitutes its central heart. Jesus thereby re-integrated, potentially, holiness within human nature. What He wrought in Himself, as the God-Man, that men would yet do within themselves.

This is as a light falling upon His practice of speaking first the word of forgiveness prior to His mercy of physical healing. The spiritual held the supremacy within Jesus' soul. His whole life was an embodied 'Seek ye first the Kingdom of God'. To redeem man, Jesus knew that He must first lay broad and deep that holiness which sin had scorned and denied, for God is His own law, and holiness is its life. Here Jesus' heart is felt to beat: here all His work is done: here He gathers up His life to thrust it out in death where His greatest ^{task} awaits Him. All He was in Himself, all He visioned, all He endured, here find their focal point and draw their inspiration. 'It is finished', as a suffering and a grace, has a dual connotation: the lesser is that the struggle was now over, and rest was at hand in the Father's keeping; the infinitely greater is that in His cross as reparative obedience He had asserted in blood and final agony the utter supremacy of the holiness of God as essential to God and man.

Such must constitute perhaps the greatest factor in any atonement that does justice to the nature of God and the sinful disobedience of man. The throne of the Eternal as the foundation of the whole universe of being must be maintained at any cost. This set the unique task for Jesus, to which He adhered to His last breath. As a result it has made the cross the most apocalyptic and dramatic hour in the whole history of man. 'We are beyond the idea that there is any saving value in the mere act of dying, apart from the spiritual manner of it. It is not a mere fact, but the person in it, that can mediate between soul and soul.----

The saving both of His sorrows and death came from a holy crisis, from a holy obedience, owning, in His most intense and extreme actuality of life, viz. agony and death - the righteousness of the broken law. The law was a law of hungering holiness, and the submission and sacrifice were not the mere clamant justice of Divine wrath.' (43) (44) As thus put, there is hardly a man who has anything of puritanical and regenerative culture in his blood who is not compelled by inner constraint to bow the head in solemn consent. Indeed, it must make an infinite difference to the Church, as Forsyth says, if she can say without dubiety that the first charge on the Redeemer is ~~first~~ the holiness of God, next man's soul. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar.' If the stars hold on in their orbit by reason of a force other than their own, and only so hold, so man is held within the holy will of God. Religion, in the final analysis, is not impressional, nor psychological, but theocentric - it rests in God, or is driven a wind-blown thing down the way of the caprice of man. Thus there are many theologies, but fundamentally there is only one religion.

The New Testament emphasis on the death of Christ is that of reparative obedience to the Father. Human life falls in behind that record, or collapses upon its own centre. Slowly, yet surely, the world of serious religion revolves upon His pivotal soul and crucial work unto a repentant facing of God and a humble and grateful acceptance of His will. 'In Thy will is our peace.' This is the inner law of ethical and spiritual life, or none is

finally known, hence the collapse of ethical standards where Jesus is expressly denied. This is the outworking in experience of what Jesus effected as moral and spiritual victory. To the whole reality in God, Jesus unfailingly responded, and His obedience has placed ^{it} at the express centre of human life.

That responsive, reparative obedience has made perfect again the connection with the Divine which the Bible states was severed through sin. In that act of the cross where obedience sums itself up in extreme finality, man is re-instated to his home in the foundational holiness of God. There and there only is he redeemed; only there is his life safe; at that life-centre sin and death are past - he has crossed over from death into life. 'This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' The division between God and man is ended; the era of union has set in for ever. As a result, that obedience marks the return of moral power to man, itself the gift of the grace of the Redeeming Son. The slaves of sin are now the lords of life, more than conquerors on the hazardous fields of subtle and deadly temptation. They master life because in the holiness of God they themselves are more deeply mastered. Over them the alien power has no constraint, and they go on, as the embodied kingdom of God to possess the future.

It is the epic of holy, unconquerable will, itself attesting solitariness in Jesus and His cross. Here again we feel the pulse-beat of the atonement. Jesus knew, that the Father's will led to Calvary; that there was no other alternative but that

He suffer the onslaught of sin in that nature and measure; and in the act and hour of encountering its worst to vindicate for ever the right of the holiness of God in every field of life; and so wrench the crown of sin's power for transmutation in His hands. He never drew back; He moved forward, His face set as a flint that cannot be bent though it may be broken. He obeyed to the last thought, the last stretch of the will, the last tremor of the emotions, the last surge of the soul in worship. He willed His soul out into the utter darkness beyond any borderline of light, and enduring that darkness came through it to the light again. He obeyed to the last breath, which was a self-committal to the holy love of the Father. He traversed the realm of man's doom that He might win it back unto the territory of the Father.

The cross is the dominant, nay, the only epic of this order. It bears as it declares its own proof. It is proof sui generis. When is a thing really proved? A thing is proved, in Kantian phrase, when it shines by its own light, illumines its germane universe of reference, and is seen to be accordant with the deepest cosmic life. The Christian heart feels it to be axiomatic that we best vision Jesus in the hour of His cross. There comes the intuition that a new world of greater reality is breaking in upon life, a new dimension is dawning on the soul.

Every new dimension, however, demands interpretation. Such is here needed. Gethsemane supplies that demand in its central word 'will' - 'not my will but Thine be done.' There on the cross Jesus was concerned with wills, so to speak, interlocked in action - the will of God, the wills of men, and midmost

His own will. It is a case of will with^{will} and against will. Such, of necessity, involves doing and suffering. Here we are not dealing with things - we are far beyond the physical realm, though it constitutes environment. How many wills did Jesus encounter? He knew and loved the will of God, with which His own was integral. There was the hate-charged will of Pharisee, Sadducee, a twin-will fused together against Him; Pilate's will, as that of Rome, was also involved; the communal will - accepting such without taking sides in the psychological debate whether we have a right to speak of a communal will - was also stirred, as the pooling more or less of individual wills in the coalescence of vision and desire. But did Jesus intuitively and ethically sense another will? What of the will of 'the Prince of this world'? We moderns are laying it aside as the language of a less psychological and scientific age. Yet in very deep hours (and that of the cross is the deepest though the centuries have passed) we instinctively gravitate to the side of Jesus, and to His vision, to His interpretation. He spoke not a little about what we now are silent. Perhaps we are wiser grown - but - -? What if that Dark Spirit be really back of all human wrong and sin? We must farther speak to this issue.

What was the problem set for the will of Jesus, and accepted by Him? It was to end the gulf that existed between man and God. The gap is both gulf and veil. God is beyond us and hidden from us. The Christian position is that God purposed that His Son bridge the gulf, and in so doing reveal Him to the world. On the plane of history where a priori as Spirit He cannot come, actually

He came in the Person of that Son. In Luther's phrase, Deus Absconditus has become Deus Revelatus.

The problem deepens when we remember the racial inheritance into which Jesus entered at birth. He is now on one side exposed to all that the race can transmit to Him; He comes under the race-pressure; He is one among human wills, and sprang from one born 'under the law'; His will is mediated in the measure that the inner blood of the race, and its ethical strain, can so mediate it. Thus He stands where all others stood. It must be a case of 'posse peccare'. We therefore disagree with the position taken up by Camfield in his recent volume, Revelation and Holy Spirit (p275) where he says that the very connotation of the Incarnate Word forbids this thought. 'The non potuit peccare belongs to the very definition of the Incarnate Word.' The contrary, he thinks, is a piece of sheer humanism and moralism, not to say presumption. Where this writer goes astray, we think, is that he deals with the matter in question under the guise of categories, e.g. 'belongs to the very definition'. Such is too tenuous to set it against the implicit testimony of the New Testament. 'The Word became flesh.'

Here we strike the paradox of Jesus again: alone on the face of moral and spiritual history, He never succumbed to racial pressure, to the insidious gravitation of racial dream, to the age-spirit abroad in the world, to the local environment of the day. He was Master on all issues, and at every point; neither in life nor debate had one the mastery over Him. His Church affirms that

it is so|because He clung to God, with a God-obeying will as over
 against the God-defiant will in the world; ^{also} that He kept thus to
 the end, summing up such willed-obedience in the sacrifice of
 the cross, and in so doing redeemed the human will for God.

A noted exegete on the Johannine epistles draws express
 attention to the passage 'He came by water and by blood', i.e.
 when Jesus bore His cross outside the holy city. He suggests
 that the author's meaning is that Jesus did not completely come
 to us from God's side until He went out into death; that is, He
 could not fully will Himself savingly for us until He uttered,
 'It is finished'. 'He came - entered into the sphere of His
 messianic action - by water and by blood. His baptism was the
 initial act, His death the consummating act, of His self-consec-
 ration to the work of the world's redemption -- He "came" by
 blood. He did not depart by blood ---. There was that in the love
 of God - the love of Christ - which water could not, which only
 blood could express. There was that in the need of man which
 water could not, which only blood could adequately meet.' (45)

This means that Jesus, man, and God met apocalyptically
 at the cross. From the bosom of the Father Jesus came fully to
 man and his need there at the cross. He was never wholly born,
 so to speak, within the realm where the will of man wrought out
 its purpose, until He came to His death-hour. It naturally was
 the hour of deepest reality - reality emerging at the moment
 of apocalypse, the inbreaking of the Divine. He came at last
 there, after which He had no further journey to make.. Jesus is

spanning the gulf.. 'That the abyss between the Holy Father and us the sinful should have been crossed from the further side: that in Jesus the guiltless suffering of the righteous, and for us, should have put on its absolute and final form, leaving nothing undone by God that might be done, nothing unendured that might be borne - this is nothing -- but a strange and unimaginable miracle. We cannot measure it, but we can drink in life from the thought of it; and its wonder, which no mind can compass or define, we can sing.' (46)

It is an apocalypse of opportunity and grace. It gave man an opportunity he had never known before: his will had never met the Divine will in this sense and embodiment before. The $\alpha\iota\omega\upsilon$ thus is at its $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ i.e. apocalyptically, though not teleologically: the latter lies in the future when eschatology is summed up in fulfilled teleology - when Christ finally comes to His coronation.

Prior to this opportunity of grace, the world could go on and on - 'As in the days of Noah, marrying and giving in marriage.' At the $\tau\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, however, there is revelation on both sides - on that of God and of man. Here, at the cross, is the one point at which the will of man for the first time has the Word, the Will of God concretely before it, challenging its soul, bringing ethical and spiritual force so to bear upon it that a decision is inevitable. In such an hour the soul of man, through sheer compulsion, declares its own nature and the lords to whom it pays allegiance. Here again we mark the unfathomable in Christ and

His Gospel. ' It is no matter for surprise that at the cross supremely we should become aware of elements in Christianity which pass the limits of human speech and thought. All true religion enfolds what is unfathomable, and the cross with the saving experience it engenders is the focus of Christian religion.' (47) Yet Christ came with nothing spectacular about Him. He had expressly laid aside the temptation either to buy the soul's consent through ministering to its physical hunger, or to cajole by way of flaunting splendours which often take the non-spiritual heart by storm, or to drive the will of man to His standard by force. The appeal of Jesus was made on the basis of His own personality, as He Himself loved and sought to accomplish the will of God. 'The Supreme Act of God occurred not in one who possessed plenary powers or lived in the light of an open vision of His glory; it occurred in human faith and temptation and in a single isolated Figure.' (48)

Jesus yet made it clear to rulers and ruled alike that they must make a decision respecting Him. He forced the battle to the gate, and His enemies perceived the nature of the hour. In incisive parable, He had revealed their intention as He had read it, and in a short while they fulfilled it to the very jot and tittle. They cast Him out, as the husbandmen cast the son, with unspeakable injustice and in direst shame and with unbelievable horror of cruelty. To say the least, the cross so far as men were concerned was a disclosure of the immanent hell of our human nature.

Jesus had purposely willed Himself back from the confines

of safety to meet that hour and confront that issue. What was His purpose? To fulfil His pledge to God and to man. He is pledged explicitly to God - the Father and the Son are one in this redemptive purpose; He is implicitly to man - man will learn as the drama of the cross unfolds. Thus He will not surrender His will to man, for the simple reason that it is pledged to the hilt to God. That pledge carries with it that at any cost He will do the will of God in the moral situation, in the great 'hiatus', the abyssmal gulf that opens more widely than ever as the cross-hour nears Him. Jesus had seen and felt the menace of that 'gulf' as no one else. It yawns before Him night and day, in Gethsemane more than ever. He was born to enter it, to do in it what none other could do. Moreover, He is pledged to God and man, indubitably to God, irretrievably to man - such is the axiom of the Incarnation. He must hold to both. He will let neither go. His love goes out to both. The tension that such establishes has a content all its own, and it is beyond conception. He alone could vision and accept and understand that tension who must Himself endure it.

It is the paradox of Jesus and His situation. As the — of the cross approached, that gulf assumed every actuality that was summed up in it. He who will deal with it for God and man will move on to command the spiritual ages that are to issue from that hour. The will of God for Him embraces both that gulf and man; His will as the Son embraces both that gulf and God the Holy One. It is tension itself - the final tension of the

ages. He is pledged to God, man, and the Kingdom that is to be, but His first charge is to do justice to infinite holiness, and yet accomplish the salvation of the race. God wills that both be achieved in one sovereign act. Jesus cannot therefore disown either God or man; and He will not. Consequently, in one and the same ethical situation, He must disown man's sin but own man as the sinner, and at any cost to Himself. The question of personal cost has never troubled His soul, since from the first awareness of unique selfhood He had laid Himself on the altar of God's purpose. Jesus condemns in order to save. He disowns man's sin in the act of owning God's holiness in the surrender to the cross. He disowns the hell immanent within man's nature while He maintains man's cause before the holiness of God. Jesus delivers Himself over, according to the will of God, to the will of man and to whatever other powers there may reside within man or rule over him, that the will to redeem may meet apocalyptically with the will to sin.

'It is finished !' In the hour that sin did its worst, Jesus wrought His best - beyond anything speech can sound forth. The gulf had never opened its dread depths as when it was compelled to admit Him, and when He trod it throughout its length and breadth, and sounded its depth. And He was alone. 'The road to the cross is a road of ever increasing loneliness: and at the end Jesus is absolutely alone.' (49) Alone in the gulf of man's sin and resultant tragedy. It means that He moved into the heart of that gulf, that in the hell of our sin He made His bed that we

come not there at the last. It is an abyss of blackness of darkness beyond imagery, verbal or perceptual. And it was 'for us men and for our salvation'. The poet best expresses it:

'But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through
Ere He found His sheep that were lost.'

Is not this substitution in its very essence? Is not this the very nerve of the atonement? Is not this the actual point of reconciliation? His 'cry of desolation' embodies His experience within the gulf. Thither He had come, and the Gethsemane premonition is now His dread experience - the dark waters go shudderingly over His head. He is alone where sin can do its worst; where also it must 'dree its weird'. It is eternal in its quality of dread experience. For such a one as Jesus to be and do without God is shattering beyond anything we can conjecture. To suggest that it meant a song of triumph seems a forgetfulness of 'the bloody sweat' of the Garden. Better is the Pauline word: 'He loved me and gave Himself for me' - gave Himself unto my tragedy that my soul be delivered from the second death. Some of us have been thrust out into what the mystics call 'The Dark Night of the Soul', an hour of such intense dread and shuddering terror that it will have its perennial repercussion as long as memory lasts. But at the worst, in comparison with what Jesus must have endured, we can only be said to have entered upon the outskirts of its darkness, the mere fringe of its awful terror.

If His 'cry of desolation' means then that He came to the

deepest centre of the gulf, His 'pæan of triumph' - 'It is finished !' - means that He bridged the gulf by filling it - filling it with His grace, His love and light and presence and power. He has kept His pledge with both God and man, and the gulf marks the place where apocalyptically the grace of God met the need of man. Jesus came fully to man, as the Incarnate Son, when He came to the gulf of His sin and lostness. In so doing He not only lifts the veil from the 'Deus Absconditus', but rends it, and 'Deus Revelatus' stands clear for ever to the intuitively quickened heart.

Both cries from the cross betoken that there has been apocalypse all round, at the point of the apocalypse of the sin and tragedy of man: of God, in His purpose to reconcile His world to Himself: of Himself to be the medium of such redemption. It is an apocalypse far beyond the persistence of any body, even though it be the body of the Son of man. 'This is my body broken for you'. It was broken at the apocalyptical point of crucial atonement, when the will of man, plus the spirit of evil within him, met with the holy will of Christ to redeem.

The last view, then, that we have of Christ prior to the resurrection, is when we see Him despatching His spirit to God - but in the gulf. He does more: He redeems that same gulf, now a filled gulf, back to God. It is now a part of the redeemed spiritual territory of God - as our fathers used to say, it is 'redemption ground'. There, although the enemy of man's soul still flaunts his 'flag' and claims his victims in its domains,

Jesus establishes His victory, and gathers His church. Where He overcame sin by the sacrifice of Himself, there they overcome through Him. It is the pledge of the final conquest. Thus man forbids his mind the thought of any other mediator between himself and God. 'Mithraism was a translation from the old polytheism to a higher conception of revelation. Like Christianity -- it spoke much of sin and purification --- of a divine mediator --- and held out the hope of everlasting life to all believers. --- But --- between Mithraism is the gulf of death; and it is historically evident that the chief power of the Gospel lies precisely in the story of the cross of Christ. --- And just this is wanting in Mithraism. Can we wonder that the Unconquered Sun went down before the Galilean ?' (50)

In all these ways, the soul of the Christian has been compelled to feel and proclaim that the cross of Christ has a solitariness comparable with no other reality in the world. It shares in the uniqueness of God. 'I and the Father are one.' It is the ground of any redemption experienced by the Christian.

III. The Cross is Solitary in Limitless Reality

There have been other crosses, other vicarious pains, but one and all have been limited by time and place, by the extent and force of the personal character involved. They were all limited, belonging mainly, sometimes wholly, to their own time and precise circumstance; at the best they were but voices, influences, that at last ceased to be. With some the influence exerted, the

work achieved, extended only to near surroundings; others slipped outside parochial borders and became national; a few became international:but all were circumscribed by their limitations.

The cross of Christ,however,has known no limit,though He was born a Jew; it permits no other power to rank its equal, though before He bore it on to Calvary it was a thing accursed; it refuses to have its marches delimited by place or power or time,though in status the Christ was but a carpenter out of tiny Nazareth; it permits no racial barrier to stay its advance,and when it sweeps across such barriers,it reveals a quality that makes the keenest nationalist a far better man,thus marking a universality that transfigures patriotism. It is therefore the world's supreme paradox.

It has two settings,the temporal and the Eternal,though where the one ends and the other begins,finite mind even at its acutest and best cannot define; it belongs to two orders of reality,the human and the Divine,and here again the border lines escape definition; it has so wrought itself into both time and eternity that all we can fathom of the latter is pledged to it,and the noblest qualities of time are redeemed unto finer nature by it.Unlike other master-forces,it ever abides at its zenith,nor shows the curve of decline,since it is sphered within the Almighty. It is true that man may default in loyalty from its austerity and truth,but that means that he forfeits his future in its eternity,not that the cross sinks to the dust.

Other forces, dynasties, orders must wax and wane, but not so that gaunt yet glorious cross. As comes the dawn over its eastern hills, silently yet irresistibly^{is}, so comes the cross of the Artisan of Nazareth, nor can empires and antagonistic movements keep it back; it is organic with the universe of being. As well try to stem the advance of the sea with voice or hand: as well attempt to deny the silent law of gravitation: it is eternal with the love and purpose of the Eternal Father. This is not a cross, it is The Cross. The shame that at first seemed to darken it but serves now to illumine its purpose and its unconquerable power of redemptive persistence against the worst that always rises to stay its advance. It is the 'fiat lux' of a greater chapter of Divine and human history than that of Genesis. 'To conceive --- Calvary in the sense of a narrow historicity is to rob the cross of a glory which St. Paul was quick to perceive and which the deep heart of the Fourth Evangelist discerned so piercingly. ---- It is only on the pre-historic rock of Eternal Love that the crucified Son of Man can truly be lifted up from the earth. --- If the cross that was reared on Calvary^{...} saves the lost and ruined soul of man, it is because it is the groundplan of the universe. --- A cross that only operates in the little patch we have fenced off from the whole coherent field of life is a depleted cross.' (53)

a) The cross is limitless in its treatment of sin.

Firstly, Jesus is the vicarious Bearer of sin. 'Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.' This is not

an aside of the Fourth Gospel, thrown off in a moment, but really sums up in simple Gospel brevity the deepest conception of the Early Church of what Christ had done for its soul. It was seen as His most perfect work

It is so held today. Across the mists of the years, the modern Church has the vision of Calvary, and cries, 'He bore our sin in His own body on the tree'. As nowhere else, she discerns the very radiance of the love of God in the cross, its glory unstained, its immortal bloom unsullied. Jesus and God, in her experience of sovereign redemption, are welded together in the sin-bearing love of the cross. It is there that Jesus receives His deepest name, and enters upon His glory. 'From this time, He was no longer to be "Son of Man" to those that loved Him. --- Now "the Son of Man" though still remaining in their hearts, was to be loved under a new name, because they would not be able to separate Him from the Father, and from the Spirit whom He would send down from the Father --- It was not that Jesus -- would henceforth cease to be human; it was rather that God, in their minds, revealed through Jesus, would henceforth cease to be non-human.' (56)

Through the cross, then, the race has learned the terrible truth that sin is God's greatest travail, that it makes upon Him the fiercest impact that anything could possibly make. In the dread weight of the cross men know that Eternal Love is sin's burden-bearer through ageless years, and that His travail has no equal in the universe. It is just here, in this vision of the Father, hurt to the quick, that has occasioned man's truest

penitence. He has glimpsed a cross of shame in that Holy Spirit, the cross that sin always creates, a burden and a pain otherwise impossible, and at all times incredible, apart from what took place in that Son on Calvary. For it is easier to believe in the impassibility of God - easier to thought processes as well as to some phases of worship - than to see Him personally involved in such pain and shame. Still, the greatest lesson of all time is learned here, viz. that all sin must and will be dealt with, shudderingly dealt with, dealt with in utmost holiness and inflexible justice, and by real application and relation to every reality both in God and man; and yet, most awesome truth of all, dealt with in overwhelming and shattering mercy. That is, God 'dooms man to salvation'.

Once it is seen, therefore, there is no formula under the heavens capable of finding a lodgment in man's fundamentally truthful mind that can exhaust the significance of this burden-bearing sacrificial love. Paul has drained and strained thought and almost created a new language to express what measure of its glory he himself saw and experienced, but at last, as all others, he falls back from the region of category upon the deeper realm of chant and doxology in order to find the relief of his soul in praise and awed worship. 'St Paul did not attempt, and could not have attempted, to relegate this miracle of God to one poor doctrinal formula. We make it impossible for ourselves ever to understand his position at the foot of the cross if we begin by endeavouring to reconstruct 'the' doctrine of Paul.' (57)

Secondly, in the cross we see Jesus as the Wrecker of sin, another phase of the inimitable glory of that death. Until that cross was erected, sin had not painted its darkest picture: it had to take the pigments of Calvary to do that, but once done it was done for ever. Nothing had ever made sin to be seen as its very self, and as such both confessed and condemned, as did the cross. One sees sin there declaring its own self to be the last alien in life, alienated from the best and noblest in God and man. To vision the cross rightly, is to abhor sin's nature, its deadly hate and cruelty; while to endure its worst as Jesus did, is to condemn it as in no other age and by no other life. In His agony over sin wherever He saw it, coupled with redeeming love for the sinner: in His sense of shame at its committal, yet without despair of the restoration of its doer and victim, He makes sin to be seen as an appalling intruder within holy places, as a foul perversion of something essentially good. Thus by all that He Himself is and suffers, by all the influences He brings to bear upon the soul, He breaks the race potentially from the fetters that have so closely and fiercely bound its spirit, and with Himself as link and bond lifts it up to God in a new responsive obedience.

Is there a specially deep sense in which Christ broke the fetters from man's soul; that is, was it more than a purely psychological fact? In other words, may we not accept as valid Jesus' word on the eve of the cross respecting 'the Prince of this world'? It is difficult to accept the conclusion that Jesus

dealt **only** with Annas and Caiphas, with Judas Iscariot, with Herod and Pilate, with the crowd, and not with a much darker and more powerful spirit. We feel that Jesus dealt not only with the will of man as man, but also with the will of God, and with that intervening other will, that darker will summed up later on by Paul as the head of those 'principalities and powers in heavenly places'. Jesus never felt His keenest fight to lie with men; a fact which lies plain on the face of the Gospels, and which must not be dismissed by slighting reference to a naïve belief of that age in demons. To Jesus, it appears, the will of man, embodied somewhat in his sin and in his sinfulness, was as secondary deposit of such unseen wills. It is admitted that this view is hard to put forth and perhaps harder to maintain in this age of the quasi-worship of psychological experts and veneration for their findings. Psychology has many a subtle method of interpreting this demonic-suggestion. At its best, however, it can **only** deal as a science with man and his complexes; with ultimates it has no sovereign word; they lie beyond its furthest horizon. In that deeper world beyond its sight its clever writs do not run, and have no currency. In addition, it cannot be dismissed that the influence of Jesus in the world has wrought a mighty change. Many things that had power in that earlier age have no pertinence in the lands that have known the Gospel of His cross and Presence. But in India, for example, especially among the Outcastes who practice demon-worship, one feels more readily the possibility of darker wills

and intelligencies and emotional driving forces. That Jesus always drives such belief from the realms over which He comes to rule, is no evidence that such beings do not exist.

Of course, it is open to anyone to say that Jesus shared the naïve belief on this subject with His age, and that He was thus mistaken. It is rather a hazardous position for one who pins his faith in the veracity and validity of what Jesus has been and ~~has~~ done. We may well pause from laying a sacrilege of this order upon the mind of One who has swung the whole world of thought and worship upon the axis of His Person and work. If only a genius can understand a genius in his native realm; if it be just that a man be tried by his peers: then to measure Jesus one needs to find another. Where is there a second Jesus? A Celsus who has no part or lot in Christ may seek to place Jesus among the misguided and deceived, but not the Christian whose very standing before God rests with that same Jesus. For if Jesus were mistaken respecting 'the Prince of this world', might He not conceivably be mistaken respecting God, and man, and the latter's destiny?

One finds a profound need, viz. a holy perspective, the gift of the Holy Spirit, from which to discern ~~through~~ the intervening mists of the years this One who has left man only Himself as Redeemer. 'In trying to understand Him-- -- I am continually discovering how far He passes my comprehension, and I see Him standing upon a level far above anything I know ---- .The truth about ^{the} Jesus of History will ultimately be found to be such that

I have erred, not indeed in exaggerating His manhood, but in underestimating the extent to which He lived on earth as Incarnate God. But what it would be like to be God incarnate is a mystery that passes our comprehension..... It is enough if in attempting to study Him as man we find One who cannot be confined within the bounds of manhood but draws us on to worship Him as God.' (5I)

It may well be that in the last analysis the Church will stand or fall by such a faith as this, viz. faith in One in whom neither mark of sin nor flaw of thought can be seen as detracting from His essential transcendence. Perhaps in this age, as in that of His own time, the Christian is called upon to witness to a Christ who is still a 'stumbling block' to the wise and prudent, a 'scandal' to the worldly wise. The fact of the Gospels is, that on the perceptual plane of the ordinary man Christ is the most unheard of and the most amazing paradox. We can no more explain Him than we can imitate Him, leaving nothing in Him to which we have not attained. He is always beyond us, and man as man is no nearer the Christ-stature now than when He came to His disciples. 'Do ye not yet understand?' He kept asking them. Even so does He repeat today. The greater we intuitively feel Him to be, the nearer do we know we are to Him. 'My mystery is for Me, and for the sons of my house.'

If therefore He left His disciples in the greatest hour of His life and ministry with the final word that He was on the eve of His greatest encounter with the Arch-enemy of man and God:

that He was about to face embodied evil as never before: that there was to be the last grapple with the dark spirit of the age and of the fallen world: that all the forces of His life and purpose were resurgent to give battle to such at any cost to Himself: that through this fell encounter He would break for ever that tyranny from man's haunted spirit: if Jesus believed this, and endured His cross in the courage of its truth, what mood or attitude is left to the Christian other than that of worship and grateful homage? If the mind conflicts with what Jesus has said, it is an evidence of its need for the deeper illumination of His Holy Spirit. 'Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus', is as germane to this, as the application Paul made.

It is this vision of the cross, supremely victorious over the seen and unseen realm, that has always supplied inspiration and power to wreck sin, and to affirm that Jesus is the final Lord in the affairs of men.

Thirdly, Jesus through His cross is seen as the Transmuter of sin. Generally speaking, sin is a faculty diseased, a lawful power perverted, a good made eventually evil, a divinely potential selfhood marred and made an instrument of wrong. Jesus is seen as confronting redeemingly this calamity of human nature. Through His cross He restores lost sensitiveness of conscience, a reverence for the noble things of God, a beauty in inner places. Jesus harnesses the forces formerly used for wrong into agencies that serve the Kingdom of God. Thus He transforms the enemy into a friend, an alien into a son, darkness into light, and hate into

love. Jesus rouses the whole personality unto the quest of the ideal man. He transforms remorse into penitence that works for greater life. He re-instates asceticism into its place as that which masters the flesh for the service of the spirit. Under His spell, what made earlier for rebellion now makes for loyalty, and men respond under His leadership to the love and sacrifice of the Father. In a word, Jesus never permits any one real trait essential to man's full-orbed personality to be either spoiled or lost, but directs all unto fullest self-realization in worthy ventures for God and man.

b) No limit discerned by man can be predicated of the cross.

i. The cross is beyond the limits of range and height and depth.

No range limit is applicable to the cross. There is no common ground of thought or experience so cosmopolitan and yet so individualised as Calvary. No race can be excluded from the scope of its redemption. 'There is neither Jew nor Greek.' No soul can be barred out from its potential gift of forgiveness and renewal and re-instatement in the Divine life, save that of personal refusal. The centuries have shown no other force with a fraction of its power for spiritual reformation. No other form of regeneration is so inherent and so capable of harnessing every valuable force in the person and his environment as is the cross. It seems to be everything which so many other agencies are not, and operates where the majority of such sicken and die.

The range of the cross is determined, apparently, by two unique factors, viz. the heart of God and the need of man as man. Thus it redeems the flower of university life and the degraded in mind and spirit of the slum, and lifts the eyes of both unto its own truth. It appeals equally effectively to the man of modern culture and to the savage in his jungle. Calvary now is the world's redemptive centre at which man's fairest hopes put on new life and are transfigured beyond dream. It can be nothing other than the work of 'a God who takes and keeps the most resolute and self-sacrificing initiative, is not repelled by sin of man, but comes right through its burning flame, and, scorched and yet Almighty, holds out His pierced hands of welcome and salvation, and says, "Come unto me." (59)

It is this Divine quality of the Christian religion that more than anything else has secured the emergence of sterling individuality. Once a man really learns the relation in which Christ stands to God, and that that Christ died for him, a wholly new dimension of being and worth stands out clearly before him, in the light and strength of which he must henceforth live.

This does not pave the way for an irresponsible individualism, as is so marked in not a few centres of modern life, but the mind is driven to see a new solidarity of society beyond anything it had seen before, viz. the social order as the unit also for which Christ died. The Fatherhood of God, as attested by the sacrificial Sonship of Christ, reveals a potential brotherhood of man of such a nature that enmities must be of the past.

Here in Christ these two complementaries find a nexus hitherto unknown. It seems that at one period one aspect has been stressed, at another time, another, but rarely has a group arisen if ever, where both have been seen as essential to the nature of man. In Jesus however there is that capacious mind and spirit in which both these are at home. The world for its own peace and advancement of true personality must learn of Christ. This is the task that awaits a courageous modern Church. If she fails to make it real to the present age, there hardly seems a remote possibility of permanent peace on earth. 'The redemption is corporate. Christ is the New Man, the Second Adam, the head of a new race, which in purpose and intention is to extend to all the world. So it is potentially on behalf of the whole race, and effectively for all who believe in Him, that Christ acts as Redeemer.' (6I)

As in range so in height, no limit is applicable to the cross. No height known to man out-scales or out-reaches that cross - it is the measure of the stature of the fulness of God, and of that fulness in sacrificial intention and execution. It is therefore the ideal sacrifice beyond the loftiest known to ancient or modern man. It is the reach of God beyond that of His creature, man. Consequently, it is a height to which our noblest but vainly approximate, and can never wholly realise. 'There is unveiled to us in Jesus a God whose moral infinitude we cannot measure or rationalise; it dawns on us, as He holds our gaze, and bears us down in adoration. The Church as yet has scarcely taken

in this disclosure. Quite possibly we are only at the beginning of deciphering the implications of the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself", and have so far done no more than open a vein of meaning they suggest. We must yield our minds to be dilated and reconstituted by the forgiving love embodied in Jesus Christ.' (62)

The fact is that we must recall our souls from our superficial familiarity with the thought of Christ's transcendence, and let the great truth win us over to the wonder that took that early age with storm. It is an amazing paradox, and one that charges the sensitive with something like numinous awe, that Jesus alone of the human race has stood on the inaccessible heights of God; as the Son He has known that wondrous Face, and has declared that it is not the face of a Sphinx, nor that of an impassive Fate, but the face of the Lover of men, the face of the Eternal Father for whom no sacrifice is too costly to bring back His lost world.

Knowledge and standing go together. This is no formal matter; it is the committed heart that pierces through to the mystery of Christ and God. When a man, e.g., finds himself in Christ, he knows that it is all true, but forever beyond anything that language or emotion can embody. Amid his mortality man has often dreamed of One who might care as Jesus has shown, but it has only been a dream, more often than not he has lost himself in the mist of conjecture, or sought Him in the slime of forbidden degeneracy. But in the cross of Jesus, man has known

why the race has never really been without some 'dream' of God, why the race has been divinely haunted with the thought of the Eternal, from the earliest day on to the 'daimon' of Socrates and the prophetic 'rapture'. Now in Jesus he knows that the spirit of God has sorrowed with him through the ages, and has always been seeking to be real to him, a partner with him in his pilgrimage and its incidental travail, One who at the fit hour arose and descended and became a sufferer beyond his own sorrow, lowering Himself holy and unbroken to sin's rule into the deepest gulf that He might crown man with His own nature and future. Such is the height of the cross.

The depth also of the cross has no limit, reaching down beyond all else, further than any other can go. There are no deeps that the cross does not plumb. To save from sin, for example, the cross must run deeper than sin itself. The most abysmal sin stays it not, nor the most unqualified despair arising from out its curse. Even the 'bottomless pit' would give up its lost if the Lord of the cross so will. The 'Harrowing of Hell' is a queer but very significant chapter in early Christian thought and literature. Apocryphal but intensely symbolic, summing up the thought that there is no sphere, anywhere, of any degree of iniquity or lostness, into which the Christ may not enter. When He calls there is none to say Him nay. There is such a thunder of command in that 'still small voice' of the Crucified that masters ^{it} the tumult of hell.

(63) Was ever paradox so paradoxical? Was ever lost man so

saved. It suggests that the most lost has but to cry, 'Let me hide myself in Thee', and no might that formerly held him captive can hold him any longer. That reach of the Lord of the cross runs beyond every other authority. 'Jesus --- grants us --- a future and a hope.' (64)

Despair then is transcended in the depths of the mercy of the cross. The hand of the Crucified reaches us with the love-stretch of the Eternal. None need despair because of the entail of his sin, and its seeming inevitable retribution. Jesus forgives so greatly that sin is swallowed up in victory. Jesus and His cross spell out the height and depth, the length and breadth of the whole God intent on saving His world. Then there is nothing like the cross unto an infinitude of difference. Paul spoke of the force which reached him and redeemed him transcendentally as the *δύναμις θεοῦ*, the miracle of God. Bunyan, when he saw the cross, saw also a gulf at its foot into which his burden of sin which had nearly broken down his life disappeared for ever. What a depth ! Those of the deepest ocean are as shallows in which children play. The depth of the sin-bearing, sin-forgiving, sin-forgetting love of Almighty God ! It would be the purest and most sinful hyperbole, for which no penalty could be too severe, if it were not true, and had not been able to stand up to the acid test of the ages. But what Christian does not know, so far as experience and thought can go, that the cross has no dimensions other than those that inhere within the love and purpose and sacrifice of God?

ii. The Cross is Timeless.

This cannot be predicated of any other work or suffering known to history, either of man or nation, but it is a truism of the cross. Time lays back into the grave whatever has come, out of the womb of time. The debris of countless religions cover the face of the earth, while the number of those unknown vastly out-weigh the historical. All are shades, at best, of what were once potent realities, the nod of whose priests meant life or death. The most are dead; one or two are lifted up into greater forms, but none can be said to be timeless. But the very connotation of the cross bespeaks its timelessness. From out the timeless past of God it has moved into time in the Christ, and it goes on to dominate the eternities ahead. The late Newton Marshall noted the victorious cross carved upon the old pagan upright stones on the Cornish moor. Such is pertinent. (66)

Being timeless, it is naturally at home in every period, taking the forms of current thought in order to express its deeper wonder, at the same time lending a deeper depth than such would otherwise have known. Thus wherever the cross comes to men now, no matter the race or epoch, it seems to emerge with such a present and particular message as though wholly of this hour, especially for current need, with an immediate and radically redemptive power and uplift as though destined for such an hour.

Primarily, the cross is not the relation of God to sin, but the expression of His love to man. Sin but drove that love to its sacrificial expression, but it did not determine either

the quantity or the quality .It is almost useless to argue on the problematical point what would have been the advent of God into a sinless world,since we have never known a world other than ~~this one~~,and its sin has had its effect upon the whole of personality,hence affecting its vision and thought. All we can do is to accept the truth that the love of God is timeless,and that the cross has wrought its sacrificial meaning into the texture of human thought and feeling.It is therefore the love that is the basis of the sacrifice,not the sacrifice as the basis for the later growth of love. God's love therefore has always been sacrificial.Our love may and must grow from the potential to the actual; but there is no growth in God.'The Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world'(Rev.xiii.8) may be a gloss from xxi.27,but it does state the position of the Christian. He feels that his redemption did not depend upon something fortuitous in time,nor yet upon such a cosmic factor as the necessity for God to deal with man's sin. Such might serve as the occasion for its expression,but the watershed from which it streamed was none other than the timeless love of the Eternal,the deep culmination of the inherent purpose within His heart.Thus the Jewish Christian rightly saw in Jesus the fulfilment of prophecy,and Hoskyns fitly draws out attention to Mark's insistence on this phenomenon.(65)

As in every other issue,Jesus here stands out isolated from every other historical figure. The ends of the ages are summed up in Him,and with Him the future lies. As the Son He came to man

out of the eternities with the cross nestling in His heart,
 and with that cross as redemptive achievement He moves on to
 possess the future for the sake of the Father, and the Church
 He has redeemed in blood. Thus it is not surprising to note
 His accent as neither past nor future but of the timeless present
 - 'Before Abraham was, (γενέσθαι) I am (εἰμι)'. The
 Apocalypse has a great word to say on this point: 'Behold I make
 all things new.' The cross that can bring this about must be
 the most solitary thing in creation or beyond it, as unique as
 God Himself. Even so does the poet sing:

'None other Lamb, none other name,
 None other hope in heaven or earth or sea;
 None other hiding place from guilt or shame -
 None beside Thee.' (68)

CHAPTER FOURTHE FINALITY OF JESUS CHRIST

The message Jesus gave, the deeds He wrought, and the personal attitude He assumed before every order of reality, suggest One at home in a world of deeper dimensions than that with which we are familiar. He moved easily within the realms of the seen and unseen, crossing over the intervening mystic border at will. This has occasionally been denied for various reasons, but it is the assertion of faith, and experience of centuries has shown its validity.

That He left no elaborate system of doctrine is no loss, but rather attests the sanity of One who has since been the Supreme Teacher on the greatest themes that have held the heart of man in all the ages. There is still no doctrine apart from Jesus, and every message that can in a measure be considered such is inseparable from His Person.

It is true that He used the thought forms and ideas of His generation, but the content He gave such is all His own, and as such transcends form and idea. As a result His message is as fresh and pertinent today as when it stirred the air of Palestine. Jesus drew His teaching from a profounder source than contemporary knowledge, and that source gave it the note of infallible certitude. (I)

The word He spoke bore the characteristics of His own soul, and these have written themselves upon the soul of the world ever since, viz. clear-sighted soberness tempered with

flame, poise, stability, assurance and veracity. To know that Jesus spoke a word, is to assure oneself of its utmost truth. He spoke as one who had at His back reserves adequate for the finest validity. 'Ye have heard it said by those of old time, but I say unto you -', was a frequent form of speech with Him. There was no trace of weakness in presentation, no stumbling as of one groping for vision and truth; He stands over against the greatest in Hebrew history to affirm, or amend, or deny.

For crucial example: In assuming the office and title of Messiah, He did the last thing His people anticipated of the long expected Messiah. 'We sometimes forget what a novelty that was (sc. preaching). No one had ever dreamt of such a function in connection with the Messiah---. The fact that Jesus the Messiah taught as He did is a new thing, and yet a thing taken for granted somehow by the New Testament historians.' (2) That being so it is a still greater wonder to mark what He taught, viz. that He Himself must be taken as the final truth of God as personalised in Himself, of His kingdom, of man, and of eschatology. But from first to last He was the amazement of all who knew Him. It was impossible to fit Him into the framework of hope and dream, sometimes because He was against such; frequently because 'He broke through language and escaped'. The result is 'that it is futile for any purpose of final explanation to deal with the world or any part of it without regard to its crowning fact. There can be no complete philosophy, --- which professes to explain the whole world, without including

Christ and all that is involved in Him; allowing Him simply to come in as an afterthought after the serious part of the work has been carried out.' (3)

A. On finality therefore as expressed in Jesus three points may be noted, viz.

- I. ~~The Implicit~~ Message in Speech.
- II. The Implicit Message in Miracle.
- III. The Inclusive Message of His whole Personality.

I. The Explicit Message in Speech.

i) God.

Jesus in common with most oriental thinkers never at any moment laboured at an argument for the existence of God. For such an one, the fact of God was an intuition, that neither needs an argument, nor is supported by the subtlest that can be put forward. Assumptions are the bigger factors of the soul. The name of God enters without the sense of the incongruous into daily speech, comes up in argument as a basis for deeper thought, is used whenever the validity of anything needs it - in a word, is an ultimate concept, the need for the proving which never dawns upon the Eastern mind. With few exceptions, and those among the philosophers, the Eastern has to come West to become agnostic or atheistic. This trait of character and thought may account for the singular fact that all the dominant faiths have been born in the Orient. Fundamentally, the Oriental is a worshipper. It is this Eastern habit of faith, together with time to brood deeply over mystery, coupled with the vast spaces of their desert lands, that have given these branches of

humanity their wonderful place in the evolution of religion. Jesus shared their spiritual characteristic to the full, and in Him it found its transcendent coronation. 'Jesus and the early Christians never met an atheist----The New Testament ---never gave any occasion to refute a denial of God's existence.' (4)

Jesus went deeper and moved higher -He revealed the Father. He founded the inmost nature of God in His Fatherhood.' He made it the commonplace of religion.' (5) Jesus made the term central and normative for religion and life, deepened its measure, gave it an ethical connotation, and made it to relate to man as man. The name itself was not wholly new with Jesus, but the content He gave it revolutionised it for ever. Especially with the nobler faiths, we may well believe the worshipper drew near to God 'Who had not left Himself without a witness', but only through Jesus have men come through to the Father. Through the other faiths they came within the vast sweep of His shadow as it covers the earth, but through Jesus men come home to His heart. Jesus made such the unique experience of His disciples. 'They felt it through Him.' (6) At the best, Jesus found it a mere outline, and filled it with His own unspeakable content; found it a wraith-like conception, and gave it body and heart; found it static, and made it supremely dynamic for thought and worship; found it more or less national, and made it a gift to the individual, thus universalising it for all men everywhere. He found it a prophetic surmise, a daring guess, a stray and unfamiliar intuition in a poet's heart, and made it so real and

all-comprehensive, so near and intimate, so creative and merciful, that now to think of God at all satisfactorily, is first and mainly to see Him as the Father to whom Jesus made the unquestioned and unqualified surrender of Himself. He is forever Father to us, because in Him Jesus found that quality to be the final analysis of His character.

The marvel is that it was in distant Nazareth, under the care of the silent Joseph, that Jesus first glimpsed the nature of God as such; the word may well have been introduced into His human heart by His peerless mother. They both gave it implicitly and explicitly to their greater than Son. 'Nobly he must have filled the role, if all Jesus found God to be could be pressed into the name of Father. Unsmirched and unsullied seems to have been the memory that lingered in the Master's mind.' (7) 'Jesus took up the father and mother tongue, the dialect of the human heart, and at His summons and by the transfiguring power of His own personality, the name of Father became pure and great enough to describe the inmost nature of the Eternal Care.' (8)

The deepest depth and the utmost height Jesus opened in that Fatherhood are mirrored for us in the attribute, so frequent on Jesus' lips, 'holy'. It stirred an awe in Jesus' soul that even now lingers as an unearthly fragrance about the pages of the Gospels. And holiness became the spring of all His redeeming activities. Fatherhood thus grounded in holiness was seen by Jesus as an unutterable providence, such that nothing could exhaust its mercy, a sympathy as intimate as it was cosmic. 'He is

a God involved in all the tragedy of the world, who takes and keeps the most self-sacrificing initiative, a God of energy and hope.' (9) When Jesus first moved up consciously into all this, we cannot say, for He has hidden it deeply within His own spirit, but the wonder stormed the whole of His heart. If Paul became the $\delta\sigma\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$, the slave of Jesus, the Son became the $\delta\sigma\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$ of the Father. Thereafter He discerned, it nestling at the heart of all creation, and yearned that all men with Him enter into its mystery and wonder. He has since made it visible and tangible in Himself - we know the Father, for He is like Jesus, and we can ask for no more.

The paradox respecting Jesus is that He has made it clear, nevertheless, that only the Father knows the Son. Since the Son revealed the Father, the Son remains an even deeper mystery than the Father. It is the Son who alone can unlock the inner deeps of the Father; but who can do similarly for the Son? It seems the harder task now. The Church falls back upon the ministry of the Holy Spirit. She can do no other; she has often done less, viz. has fallen back on the unilluminated rationality of non-committed men, with the result that superficial interpretations have been made, but the mystery has been deeper than ever. Jesus has chosen where and by whom His 'mysterion' shall be resolved. 'My mystery is for me and for the sons of my house.' 'Notwithstanding all the Pauline emphasis upon the primacy of God, the Father, Paul can find no category for Christ that falls below the Divine mystery---Perhaps we may say that for Paul

Jesus Christ was a mystery in a sense more inscrutable than God the Father Himself. It seems as if for Christ Paul had no clear category at all.--- Jesus Christ as Paul had come to know Him had about Him the rumour and the mystery of Godhead; and the Holy Spirit within Paul testified that this was so.' (IO)

Through His message of Holy Fatherhood as characteristic of God, Jesus has made it impossible for God and sin to be thought of together save in terms of fundamental antagonism. Here Jesus carried to both logical and spiritual finality the monotheistic faith and programme of the nobler prophets of Israel. Jesus is the last of the prophets, in the sense that He has summed up prophet and prophecy and transcended both in His personalisation of the Divine. The prophet heard and declared the Word of God; Jesus is the Word. The prophets were servants in the house of God; Jesus is the Son. The prophet and his message, it is true, both fitted each other, but we can now retain the prophecy though the prophet in name and character may be forgotten. Not so the Christ. If He be forgotten, we have lost all. 'Christ's great revelation was not given in a book, not in a history or a treatise, but in a Life and Death. He showed the world a Man who knew not self, and He also shewed it the Force that came from God.' (II)

In this way, Jesus delivers the thought of the Divine Fatherhood from the bane of mere sentimentality. On His lips, as in His heart, it assumed as of final right the most austere ethical quality of thought and faith. As a consequence, it is

the safest refuge for sin-haunted man. 'His words came as a new and liberating message. In--- His strong insistence upon God's hunger to forgive --- Jesus brought a new hope ---The sin is not condoned ,but forgiven.'(I2)

As a further result, no religion can rank now as valid that cannot stand up to the white light of that same holiness. That Father of Jesus' revelation judges them to final extinction. The Bhagavad Gita of India's love brings its own charm to us as we read it, but what can be said of Khrishna? His character and 'sport' cannot stand in this white light. Thus he is being explained other than formerly. But he cannot stand examination. The mercy of Jesus validates every phase of the real, but it is, paradoxically, merciless to the unreal. Such however spells out salvation. We were altogether lost if the Father of Jesus' vision could deal lightly with sin.

Jesus taught by life and death that that Fatherhood is also the quintessence of sacrifice. It could only be accepted however after the cross had been erected on Calvary, and the Holy Spirit had revealed the deep significance of that cross in the Risen Christ. Then did the sacrificial nature of the whole Godhead stand out clearly. For the impassibility of the Eternal has been often debated, and more has been said on its behalf than against it, as, e.g. in the thought of India concerning Brahma. But when Calvary was past, and the Christ had risen from His grave amid the impenetrable shadows, then was the Christian heart compelled to realise that the Father had suffered with the Son, since such was His nature. 'God, in the

Christian view, is a Being who enters into the history of the world in a most living way--- above all, discovering Himself as the God of Redemption, who, full of long-suffering and mercy, executes in loving deeds, and at infinite sacrifice, His gracious purpose for the salvation of mankind.' (I3)

ii) Man.

That God is Father - Jesus' most fundamental intuition and intimation - carries with it the corollary that in some sense man must be thought of as His son. At the outset, however, we ought to keep in mind that this is the language of faith. It is not always easy of acceptance, and is only acceptable within its universe of reference, since there are cogent data in life that suggest its flat contradiction. For example, Jesus is shown in the Fourth Gospel as saying to some of the Jews:- 'Ye are of your father the devil'; and frequently such paternity seems easier of acceptance than the Divine.

Sonship is more acceptable when its connotation is ethicised and seen to wait on faith, i.e. on man's response to transcendent forces bringing him into saving relations with God. (I4) one 'thrust into another universe'. Memorable are the words of John I.12, 'As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God.' 'Jesus assumes that God is the Father of all men. He does not assume that all men are His sons. The relationship is for men potential. It requires to be realized in thought and practice, recovered, it may be, through penitence.' (I5)

Thus one is not permitted to say that such Fatherhood and

sonship are of equal emphasis. Man's sonship is rather a capacity for God than actuality. Jesus is the Son, but we become sons through Him. Perhaps it is better ~~put~~ to say that Jesus was so sure of the Father and His grace, so sure of His love and unwearied patience and sacrificial initiative, that He was sure also of man. At last the prodigal must come home, a son at last. Jesus therefore, in spite of His name, 'the Man of Sorrows', ranks as one of the sunniest optimists that the earth has known, able to see the worst to the extent of the cross, and yet by its presence to know that the greater reality in God is coming into realisation. Man is a potential son in spirit, greatly lost yet savable, and infinitely worth saving. In this faith and spiritual vision, Jesus endured the cross and despised its shame.

The potential corollary that follows here is that of the brotherhood of man. In the face of the deeply rooted animosities of the races of man, to many thinkers this is yet another of the so-called phantasies of religion. But the fact remains, that in Jesus men have achieved sonship with God, and in that same hour have known the spirit of brotherhood springing up within them that has overleaped the barriers of race and caste. For example, the present writer has seen in his own ministry a Brahmin, now Christian, give the Sacrament to an outcaste who was also a badly diseased leper !

What we have to mark is that Jesus no more preached the abstraction of brotherhood ~~any more~~ than that of the Fatherhood. He revealed the Father in His own spirit, and drew men to Him as He

won them to Himself. There, on that ground of saving relationship, He created the new spirit of brotherhood. That means, that only in the deeper dimensions of Himself can man awake to the spirit of brotherhood; only thus are the racial and personal animosities transcended. He called brotherhood awake as a new creation through His own spirit operative within them. Their love to Him was to wake spontaneously within their hearts a love to God and to all men through Him. John's epistle states frankly that failure to love man may be read as a failure to love God. So closely has Jesus linked the two. 'As a dogma the brotherhood of man belongs to ancient Stoicism or modern Positivism; in Christianity its place is at the circumference, and we work out to it from the centre, which is Christ.' (16)

It is on this high plane therefore that we can all be united on the dual thought of the Fatherhood of God and the sonship of man; we have both in Christ; outside of Him it does not seem to function; as abstractions they are hardly worth their thought, since they carry no power. But in Him, they are the most potent spiritual forces capable of swaying the spirit of man to a finer destiny and a nobler practice. In Jesus the Oriental and the Occidental meet; they discover themselves as they share a common allegiance to Him. 'Your brother for whom Christ died' is a talisman of fundamental unity that beggars every other known and potential bond, the like of which the world could not know until Jesus 'came' to His cross. It is at the cross we all kneel; there we acquire by blood-gift our sonship with God; there we have our blood-fusion of common brotherhood.

iii) The Kingdom.

From first to last, it was the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached, for the realisation of which He dared to die. God is its only King, to which He has given as much of His nature as it can contain; He promises to it as much as it can yet receive. It is therefore actual, in the measure it answers His will; it is potential, since God is for ever pouring Himself into it, the blessing by which it exists and perseveres against all ill and wrong. It is God's desire and purpose, as it is also man's deepest dream and aspiration. It is therefore both of earth and of heaven. To whomsoever its vision comes, he knows that it is the crucial judgment of every other kingdom.

The 'Lord's Prayer' and the 'High Priestly Prayer' reveal its central and basic quality - the holiness of the Father-King. It is therefore monotheistic, a kingdom of righteousness, a theocracy of cosmic order, only glimpsed as such in rare prophetic ecstasy and vision, but incarnate in Jesus' spirit and purpose.

Hence it could never be Israel, nor Rome, not even the world as a world; no political utopia, however nobly planned or executed could embrace its nature, and define its laws and prescribe its subjects, for God and His kingdom mean God and His people, with ultimately one will and one way sharing one nature. Thus 'ubi Rex ibi lex'. Thus they are inseparable, irrevocable, inevitable, and irreplaceable if lost. It is the realm therefore where the Holy Will is the life of the soul, loved and obeyed. 'Jesus meant both the rule and the realm of God. It was that realm of persons within which His sovereignty was accepted wholly, His will

cheerfully obeyed.' (I7)

We see therefore that in one sense it is an Immanent Kingdom; as Jesus said, 'the Kingdom of God is within you'. It is the spirit of God flooding human life and the world, welding to His purpose the surrendered lives of men and nations.

Consequently it is always Imminent. 'The Kingdom of God is at hand', said Jesus, that is, hammering on the spirit doors of life for admittance, the issue of which is the most far-ranging destiny. In other words, the Kingdom of God is God Himself in spirit extension breaking into the world of human life and activity, compelling decision in one way or another, thus carrying forward His universal purpose. (I8)

It is also Future, as we deal with it by way of our space-time concepts, though in itself it partakes of the timelessness of God. It is here we see the fusion of the Synoptic and Johannine conceptions, a suggestion of the mind of Jesus. 'Is the Kingdom of God as taught in the New Testament merely eschatological, merely future?---- It is exclusively eschatological but it is not merely future.--The Kingdom of God -- is present in Jesus Christ.--- In Jesus Christ the breaking through into the historical process of the world has begun.' (I9)

This all carries with it the further point that the Kingdom of God is Frontierless. God is one, His Son is one, His Spirit is one; holiness is one, as sin is one, as need is one - all life waits as one suppliant on God. Hence in the last analysis there is potentially only one Kingdom, one Rule, one King. We are all on one footing, alike needing His grace, His forgiveness.

The kingdom therefore as Jesus visioned and loved it, at the heart of which He saw His cross, can know neither time, nor clime, nor race, nor distinctions that divide men from one another. It has all the dimensions of its King, being but Himself in purposeful and passional extension within the human order. It is therefore the first and last necessity of life as life, as it is His profoundest mercy.

II. The Implicit Message in Miracle.

The present attitude to miracle is not quite so full of antagonism and refusal as yesterday, though it is still one of suspicion and suspense. Earlier than the modern period, miracle was urged as a reason for belief in the uniqueness of Jesus, but in modern days it has taken faith in Jesus to account for miracle. This has been, in one sense, of cardinal value; it has sent us back to Jesus for the explication of miracle, not conversely. (20)

In the Synoptists a miracle is seen as a *δύναμις*; in the Fourth Gospel, it is shown as a *σημεῖον*. Are these terms, as some have argued, necessarily disparate? The better thought is to accept them as two foci of one transcendent fact. To the enlightened mind, a *δύναμις* of Jesus becomes, ipso facto, a *σημεῖον* of profoundest significance.

The ethical implications of miracle are of the same order of transcendent reality. In the strict ethical realm, as paralleled in not a little of nature, forgiveness, if it carry the validity of the action of God, is the most outstanding *δύναμις* of Jesus. Since God is the moral guardian of the

universe, and He is Himself holy, ^{to forgive} must be the hardest task. Yet all the Gospels record Jesus forgiving as from that realm of Divine holiness. He did so prior to any healing of the body, and he made the power of one to light up the authority of the other. If miracle per se must go down, then this greater ethical miracle must follow suit.

The fundamental basis for the denial of miracle is the refusal to believe that Jesus can only be explained in the transcendent terms of God. The stories of the Gospels are written down as the naïve reports of credulous witnesses who conjured the miraculous out of their own excessive faith. With this is coupled the a priori contention that in our world of strict law miracles do not and cannot happen. If one such be pinned down to the fact, that in some senses Jesus Himself believed in His ability to work miracle, though He treated them as secondary, the retort is that He likewise was the creature of His age though of greater calibre than His followers.

To say the least, two things here are overlooked: first, it is inexplicable that as a misguided visionary Jesus should have had such power through His people to split history in twain, so that now it is the normal thing to date the years either B.C. or A.D. That it was due to His stupendous ^{influence} cannot be denied; but where is its explanation? The second point is, we should not be discussing Jesus and miracle now unless some such influence as a present fact and factor in life and world-destiny had not also to be explained. He is now the most potent

force in modern life. More people than ever look up to Him as the final word on life and ultimate destiny. Credulousness which has had a test of two thousand years seems to need a name of greater connotation. We do not fight desperately against myths and legends; yet today men have to fight against this influence of Jesus on a world-front.

That means that Jesus has to be re-interpreted in terms that will sum up what He has been and is and is likely to be. Will not miracle come into likelihood? 'How do we know what was or was not possible in the presence of the personality of Jesus ?' (21)

At this point it is of value to note that Jesus laid down the realm of universe of reference within which alone He and His work could be understood. 'To you', addressing His disciples, He said, 'it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God'; that is, it was granted to the men committed to Him, who came into the attitude and knew the experience of faith. It is so still, a phenomenon which calls for interpretation. What colour blindness means to the disclosure of nature, so faith or non-faith in the realm of the nature of Jesus. All the Gospels stand within this realm, and can only be interpreted on such ground. 'They are interpretations of Christ, written from faith for faith---, From one side and another they witness consciously and unconsciously to the belief that Jesus is Lord of all powers, visible and invisible, and that to worship the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be freed for ever from that ignorance of the world which haunts men with a variety

of superstitious fears.' (22) So Jesus was sufficiently miraculous to banish those old-world fears; a miracle that puts the so-called miracles into a secondary position. Equally strange, when Jesus is denied the old fears come back.

Faith, in the main, asserts two main points, viz. this is God's world, open to Him at every point, over which He exercises sovereign function. His laws then, as naturally understood, are the outgoings of His will. He has therefore over it both transcendent and immanent freedom. The second word of faith is, that Jesus shared God's freedom and authority over His world, and that what He willed to do that He could do. It lies within the sphere of the will, not of any abstraction of arbitrary power. It is the final dimension of reality. 'In Christ God is not preached but present, and not only kind but mighty, not only willing but initiative, creative.' (23)

This is the pressure we feel coming upon the disciples as we carefully read again and again the Gospels; it was a revelation later; at first it was the compulsion of what Jesus was in Himself. They came to feel - and it has not been overthrown - that Jesus was uniquely endowed with $\epsilon\chi\sigma\upsilon\sigma\iota\delta\alpha$ as none other; ^{also} that there was a joint fitness of Person and deed; hence these $\delta\upsilon\upsilon\delta\mu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ were the $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$ of His nature and His task. Moreover, unlike our own day perhaps, it would speak with deeper tone to them than it does to us. It spoke to them in a language they could understand, and in a form they needed to see; and God's language, be it miracle or tone, is always idiomatic to the people and the hour in which it works, or is spoken.

It seems clear, then, that if we are to do justice to the records of Jesus as we have them, we must see Him as one standing in infinitely deeper dimensions than those of normal man or abnormal and highest genius. Delete the miracles as incompatible to Him, and you write down His authority and power, the result being that you have not the Jesus of the Gospels but one of imagination, the value of which is debatable. Similarly, you have affirmed the untenability of the data germane to the issue, hence they are lost to faith. As a further result, you have shown that His abiding influence over history and the present moment is a miracle of such proportions as to be utterly inexplicable, a more outstanding illusion than any of His Gospel miracles can possibly be. In His transcendence, Jesus is shown as utterly paradoxical both negatively and positively, that is, He still demands to be understood. It does seem that faith alone has a word that fits this phenomenon, and patiently awaits one of equal proportions, to say nothing of a greater.

The characteristics of New Testament miracle may now be given:

- i) An abnormal sense of authority.

So far as one can judge, it is an authority grounded in a freedom of action beyond anything else known in history. God is free to do in Jesus as He wills. He has found no one prior to Him in whom He might so express Himself. The closest parallel had been that of the prophet over the truth of God, the knowledge of which is no small miracle. In the Son, however, we have One who alone of men can say, 'I am the Truth'.

The impression made by Jesus upon those who stood nearest to Him was that He had at His command measureless reserves which He released for beneficent purpose at will, under the stimulus of others' need. There was never any appearance of strain. Modern psychology has been as little able to disclose this as have been the other disciplines of science. As the other finalities of Jesus, it is His own secret, and only on the basis of His own conviction that it came from God through communion and obedience can we understand it.

This is borne out by the fact that time and again His miracles had a numinous effect upon those who saw them wrought, the effect of One who seemed to share the holiness of God. For example, Peter's confession at the draught of fish: 'Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord.' The analysis of such an effect suggests a will enshriningⁱⁿ a peace, an authority, a power that mastered readily all outer need or tumult, as the action of One at home, the master of self and environment. What a world of wonder there lies in Matthew viii.27.

'What rank has this man whom even the winds and the sea obey?' The cumulative effect of the awe here phrased has defied the obliterating centuries to erase from the records and the believing soul. Its parallel in word is that august yet simple word of Jesus, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father'. Such self-confession was paralleled by released power. Jesus' very word enshrined such power. 'He spake with authority.' (24)

There is a competence suggested in His miracles which never knew any sudden emergency take Him unawares; no trace of doubt is seen as to what He should or should not do; He was never rushed into any precipitate action which later He regretted; there was no task visioned which He was unable to carry through; He made no attempt to get through to God for communion and power with consequent failure. He is Master whenever we meet Him - even on the cross in saving a lost dying wretch. He knew but one limitation, though not in Himself, but in others, viz. lack of faith. 'He could do no mighty works -- because of unbelief'

What are we to say of the implicit miracle of powers never used, still less abused, for self-advantage. He wrought no miracle for His own need, not the very slightest. The 'stones' of His privation were never turned into the 'bread' for His own sustenance. Yet 'He who was rich for our sakes became poor', so poor that 'He had not where to lay His head'. 'He showed the world a Man who knew not self, and He also shewed it the Force that came from God.' (25)

Still less did He permit miraculous power and witness to procure dignity and honour and acceptance for Himself. He hid His miracle whenever He could secure human willingness to be silent after cure. They failed Him, and He withdrew again and again. They must accept Him minus miracle, though their need claimed it by way of His heart. 'He regards them as a subsidiary part of His work.' (26) They sprang from the large pity and power of His nature: need awakened His pity, and pity called forth His power. Yet He never changed His own lot by way ^{of} ^

miracle.

Now, if the miraculous in Jesus' ministry is to be termed credulity on the part of the disciples, here is the more incredible fact. It would have been an easy pitfall for an evangelist to fall into with a view to magnifying Him as **L**ord. How easy it was, the Apocryphal Gospels bear ample witness; but there is no trace of it in the four we have. All His miracles are wrought for others - He moved on towards His cross ! The restraint, thus exercised alike bespeaks their loyalty to truth, and the selflessness of Jesus. 'There is so sign of effort on the part of Jesus in performing them, and no indication that He ever looked upon them with any wonder. He evidently regarded them as natural to himself, and was as simple in spirit in performing them as ordinary men are in their ordinary actions.' (27)

ii) Miracle as revealing an unsurpassable love for men and women of every order.

Such love is integral within His love for God. It is almost if not quite impossible to separate, or even to distinguish between, His love for God and men. Jesus loved man in God. The very tension in Gethsemane and on the cross is occasioned by the fact of His love for both and of His refusal to let either go. Yet He would not let either submerge the other. Does the holiness of God hold Him; so does the great need of man. The inseparability of this love is the secret of John 3.16 - a word that was heard in the spirit by the writer or in the flesh. The effect has been that the world now knows that God loves the world of straying men and women as never before realised; and in return, the world

loves God as hitherto impossible. Here is the miracle of cosmic and individual reconciliation, one vastly beyond any recorded in the Gospels. This demands explanation.

Indubitably, no one has ever loved the simple and single heart as Jesus has. Few are the geniuses of earth; most of its peoples are those who tread common roads of thought and labour, and who bear their mead of pain and sorrow until the full-circle of their lives comes round, full-orbed also in the forgetfulness of the grave. Jesus felt the wisdom of their simplicity, and the monotony of their trudge and labour, hence no light has beaten so kindly upon such ordinary faces as has 'the Light of the world'. A mere glance at the Gospels reveals that His love for them is the redemption of their mediocrity.

Here in this love and vision is the key to all His miracles. They were impulses of pity, as some one has said, before they were expressions of power. 'He had more than human power, and more than human love; and with this combination, what so natural as that when He beheld the needy, superhuman works of grace should flow forth from Him?-- -- They were expressions even more of character than of power.' (28)

That love seemed to hold a three-fold characteristic: an amazing vision of need whenever met, whether physical or spiritual, and Jesus never drew the clear-cut distinction between these two that our time and science do; in a minute He stood at the heart of that visioned need. Next, an utter pity, with so wide ranging and deeply experienced sensitiveness that He seemed to be more deeply stricken Himself - as one blind, or leprous, or

lost. With that vision and compelled pity went a like power to redeem and remedy, ethically in forgiveness, - speaking first to the graver malady of the soul - physically in body-building and restoring the wasted frame. Jesus never seemed to confront human need without these three interlocking and interacting : the need laid bare; the pity than even surpassed the need; the power that simply leapt to save and heal.

For example, there are the miracles which mark love lifting gloom from home life: the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman; the Demonic boy; Jaitus' daughter; the son of the Widow of Nain; Lazarus. All of these, in one form or other, present their own problem, yet not all together constitute so great a problem as that of Jesus' own person.

Then there are the miracles that restore 'that which was lost'. The word 'loss' on Jesus' lips, with the emotion which was felt coming from Him, suggest how need moved Him. His name for Judas, e.g. as 'The Son of Loss' tells of His own heart-strain over one He loved. 'There is no more pathos-laden word in all the Gospels than the word "loss". It means helpless - a wandered thing on a lonely wilderness; useless - a piece of money rolled away into a dark and dusty corner, no longer fulfilling the end for which it was made; wasted - all the rich, holy treasures of the human heart poured out and fouled in the morass of riotous living in the "far country".' (29)

The miracles of the Impotent Man, the Demoniac of the desert, the Blind Beggar are pertinent, each a *δύναμις* and a *σημεῖον*. Jesus dealt with the swine as He dealt with His

own body on the cross, sacrificing the less that the greater be saved. So would He deal everywhere with personality if through its loss personality may be saved .

His love cleansing the unclean and the defiled, may be seen as a third section of miracle. His mode of cleansing has its own order of significance - an over-plus of mercy, His touch. Presumably, He might have healed at a distance, but perhaps He felt that the long ostracism from home and public life needed something more than a word - a spiritual gulf had to be bridged. 'I will, be thou clean'; and He stretched forth His hand and touched him. That touch ran its cleansing through both body and soul, and Jesus delivered him to himself as well as to his people. Comparable with this, though not reckoned as a miracle, though actually a greater miracle, was Jesus treatment of the guilty woman, as given in John's Pericope. Jesus, stood, where the noblest prophet even, would never have dared to stand - between the guilty and her punishment. But she was alone; the other, perhaps more, guilty one was remarkably absent; and the chivalry of Jesus, and more, was awake. He would not, could not excuse her, yet He could stand between her and the death-edged stones so that her nobler day come at last. Moses would have stoned both. Jesus, incarnate judgment, inflexible holiness, yet tenderness grounded in hope, made her see her sin and a pure life in front. The miracle saved as it cleansed her soul. Jesus and miracle therefore mutually interpret each other. That also requires interpretation. To deny miracle, we must deny Jesus, and in so doing we deny the loveliest and most ethical hope man has known.

iii. A third characteristic of His miracles is that they mark the release of the powers of 'the World to Come'.

As we saw above, the pregnant contribution of the Fourth Gospel to the question of miracle, is that they were $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$. Seen from this angle of perception, it is a remarkable fact that all He did partook of the qualities that were resident in Him; they bear the wonder of His person; they have the stamp of His character. They were not merely exhibitions of power - this is their least feature, germane though it is - but of holiness, love, and wisdom.

They were therefore $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\alpha$, but we must dissent from the view that this means that Jesus, according to the Fourth Gospel, worked miracles as 'signs'. John does not mean this, but that once wrought they were signs, i.e. that His disciples read the message they carried, the character they were, which is a very different thing. For Jesus never lived on the spectacular plane; He loathed it; such was one of His chief charges against the Pharisees: they were 'hypocrites', 'strutters on a stage', whose religion was 'theatrical' - and He delivered them over to war ! And they went down in utter defeat. His thought of miracle as subsidiary is seen from the fact that He taught His disciples that abnormal power was available for them, if they kept faith with God.. (30)

It seems that the best way in which to read Jesus' miracles is to regard them as the redemptive action of God in Jesus, fittingly operative in the Son to whom all power would be given.

It is significant therefore that John moves back in his word respecting the origin of Jesus beyond that of Mark and Matthew and Luke - he moves back to God. Miracle as $\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\iota\omega\nu$ has to be interpreted on this plane of thought.

We must equally dissent from the idea that miracle under Jesus' hand denotes an 'interference from without'. This is again to mis-interpret the significance of Jesus. (31) Jesus remains an enigma until we mark within Him the immanental forces of God at work within His world of which He is ever the sovereign Lord. 'I do nothing of myself' is a word of Jesus, and it carries its own proof on its face. 'He regards them (sc. miracles) as--- - signs -- of the imminent kingdom of God than of His own Messiahship.' (32) Jesus is bringing something new into the world, when He brings Himself; and that new factor is epochal, and fresh forces leap in obedience at His word.

This 'sign'-characteristic of the Fourth Gospel must not be understood as wholly peculiar to it; all the Gospels reveal that His miracles are signs that the long-promised Messiah of God is at last at the heart of Judaism, but not only for its destiny: the whole kingdom of man is included. (33) Miracle and parable alike attest this factor in Jesus. For example, to read the parable of the new wine needing new skins in the light of the Jewish debacle at the hand of Rome, consequent on their denial of Jesus, is impressive commentary. 'It is the Christology which underlies the miracles and apparently conditions the details of the behaviour of Jesus.---They are not merely miracles. They are signs of the presence of Him who should come

and who is the Victor in the contest with evil, signs also of the advent of the kingdom of God.' (54) This same writer holds that this is germane to the miracles in Mark, Matthew and Luke.

The term 'world to come' is but our space-time method of translating Jesus' intuition. For Him it meant that in Him the Father had at last that perfect and living instrument through which He could advance His purpose among men. In itself it means the epochal 'hour' in the which God would end the old dispensation, and in His Son bring eschatologically the new to light. Our term has something future about it - as in the Synoptists - but it is really that 'present moment' of God when He could give Himself more fully to mankind. It is therefore future to us, but only in the sense that it is a deeper dimension into which we have not yet been able to step; future, then, in the sense that though it is at our doors, yet they are still closed unto its admittance. It is a matter of faith and surrender, not of time or space.

Jesus, however, knew that He stood within that timeless moment of God; it became the living centre from which He always stepped out to preach, or warn, or appeal, or make disciples, or heal, or save. Thus, for example, it is recorded that only after a night of prayer did He choose His disciples; so He chose them in God. Similarly, it was from this immediate source He drew whatever power He knew for miracle or daily living. Just as the Father willed did Jesus speak or act: and thus He wrought until the cross came. 'I do always those things that please Him.'

Here we strike the native ground of Jesus' transcendence: He dwelt in God. This is the order and quality also of whatever Christology we find in the New Testament. This whole immanence of transcendence in Jesus is the source of all Jesus' miraculous power. Hence the naturalness of what He said and did. Unless we are prepared to discount what lies plain on the face of the Gospels, we must accept it as truth that Jesus knew His own personality to be constituted within deeper dimensions than even the greatest genius can claim. 'My kingdom is not of this world' is as pertinent for His own person as for the kingdom itself. Jesus was at the heart of the Messianic age, the Messiah who was also the Son; but the greater factor was not the age, but the Son, and Jesus has since been justified in His emphasis on that point. He could do no greater thing than to point to Himself. This is not egotism as we know it; it was the revelation of the Son through His revelation of the Father and His will. 'The Messianic doctrine --had been held by the Jewish people; the great thing to be proclaimed was the person. Even the Christology of the Fourth Gospel had been provided long before; what was new was the application - and the original and eloquent expression.' (35) 'The constant presence ---of the Spirit of God---placed Him on an entirely different level from all contemporaries.' (36)

A non-transcendent Jesus, therefore, cannot be fitted into the Gospel framework, Synoptist or Johannine. His miracles were as the normal outlying of the love and light and power inherent

within Him. Jesus is His own vindication to the heart that can meet Him on the native ground of His own transcendence. To all others He is an enigma to the solution of which they have not yet found the slightest hint of a clue. Within the shallower realm of science it may well be that miracle cannot happen; but within the deeper realm of Jesus they are normal to His personality. Science must begin, it seems, with the miracle itself; faith can only begin with Jesus; in doing so it deals with the greater factor, and is thus able to see the lesser lifted up into meaning and cogency. From miracle to Jesus there seems to be no road; but from Jesus to miracles there are roads innumerable.

Here then we touch on miracle itself, which is not word or work, but Jesus Himself. The very order of Jesus' personality is itself miraculous. Jesus is miracle through and through. (37) One never seems to meet Him without feeling that He stands on the threshold of the illimitable, and with utmost ease He crosses over and back again, at home within the seen and unseen realm of God's universe. He never seemed to cross in vain, or to come back, as some mystics have done, bewildered in mind and soul. The very fragrance of 'the Land of the Leal', of that other far world, is about Him whenever we read the Gospels. Whence this Man? Only faith has a fit word; all others are conjectures that do not fit. Schweitzer and his school have made it impossible for one to feel satisfied with the 'Historic Jesus' as a whole summary of His being. Only when we are contented with this earth-bound

'Historic Jesus' can we subscribe to the scientific dictum that 'miracles do not happen'. But to see the real Jesus, both historic and transcendent, is to know that what He willed to do that He was able to do.' "Tantum Jesus cognoscitur, quantum diligitur" - Jesus is known as much as He is loved.--- Jesus is greater than the tradition about Him.---It is not His system which one finds in His words, it is His soul. His words and works are self-revealing.' (38)

III. The Inclusive Message of His whole Personality.

This portion must be as brief as possible, since the factors of His personality have been manifest, more or less, throughout our whole treatment of the subject.

All His teaching, whether in speech or miracle, Jesus gathers up and centres in Himself. He is His own message to man, and transcends both speech and miracle at every turn. Friends and foes have dealt with it from every possible angle of viewpoint, and the result has been that Jesus stands out greater than ever.

i) He discloses within Himself the Reality of God.

'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father', must not be assumed as Johannine dogma, but as simple fact. If not so, then we have no sure word on God. We are shut up to Jesus on this final issue, or else the mists grow deeper than ever. If Jesus be not transcendent, it appears that we cannot hold Him as trustworthy on this most important of all issues for He claimed more than a man dare.

Man's experience the ages through is that whenever He has come vitally into contact with Jesus, in that hour he has dealt with Almighty God. This has not been a sporadic affair, but has continued ever since Jesus spoke in Palestine. Moreover, it has not been confined to any particular race, or type, or temperament; the most diverse of peoples, and the most exhaustive phases of personality have known the Divine fulfilment of their need through Jesus. Jesus does not speak so much of God, as to bring Him to the seeking soul. God comes to us in Jesus. It is useless, therefore, to speak of the 'theology' of Jesus. 'To speak of the theology of Jesus is a triviality. He had no theology for He had the living God. ---Whoever undertakes to put together a theology of Jesus for His confession makes a blossoming field into a herbarium.' (39)

As a collateral piece of evidence, whenever the face of Jesus has grown dim to the Church, it has faded from the world; but most of all, in that hour certainty of God in equal measure has diminished. Somehow they stand or fall together; in that same hour, also, in that night of unbelief, the ethical stars by which men guide their ambiguous way have been cloud-beset, and there has been no authoritative word of guidance.

The converse is, that when the Christ is seen clearly, and obeyed implicitly, revelation breaks out as light from behind such clouds, and every noble and worthy ethic by which men live is buttressed and enhanced. The greatest realities, then, stand or fall with Jesus. It is just here that all the great creeds have been born, within the indispensableness of Jesus.

His very faith in and love for God seem confirmatory evidence; this is a vastly different thing from a theology of Jesus. Where we grope blindly, He saw as in clear daylight; in this realm of the Divine wherein is so much misgiving on the part of men, He moved as One utterly sure. Here where the most of men's words are but guess and surmise, He came forth with an authority as unquestioned as it was original. Practically all the light we have on God is derivative from the 'Light of the World'. Let us cease from His revelation, and what have we left? Jesus is the final because the deepest word on God. Yet He seemed to have no need, as we all have, to go in quest of God; He is always seen as standing within that central fount of Being. The 'Sphinx' of Egypt has not the slightest relevance for Jesus; the 'Altar to the Unknown God' which sums up so much of man's thought of God is equally inadmissible. To think in terms of Jesus is to think of God. He transcends the greatest word of the noblest prophet the ages have known, and without effort. He stands over against the richest Divine tradition any race has won through travail, only to gather it all up within Himself and transcend it. Whatever Gospel man has known since His advent has been grounded in His Person. To the ageless question, whether God is a power or a person, Jesus has the last and only word. 'If we may use Plato's parable of the Cave, Jesus has brought us out into the open air, where we no longer have to be content with shadows but we see things in the sunshine of God.----- Jesus has done the thing by bringing us nearer than ever before to God, into the very heart and mind of God. It made all life utterly different -- the shadows fled.' (40)

ii. We see in Jesus the utmost reality of man.

If , on the one hand, we have to see Jesus as the Incarnate Word of God, on the other we must see humanity, both in the individual and in the mass, crowned in sinless perfection in Him. Now, since sin is man's supreme tragedy and perennial despair, here we mark in the sinless Jesus the 'ne plus ultra', beyond which point not even man's dream can run. The crown of humanity then is that of ethical and spiritual perfection, the outstanding miracle in human life. It is impossible to show Jesus otherwise. 'People talk about impossibilities, but it has been demonstrated a hundred times over that the greatest of all impossibilities is to deny Christ's sinlessness, and yet form a self-consistent theory of His inward life.' (41) His manhood shows neither stain nor scar; is unmarked by failure and ethical defeat. Jesus is that miracle - a sinless, perfect, ideal man, with spiritual strength unimpaired and with sin drastically conquered. Even the cross could not break down that ideal perfection, while His cry for forgiveness for His executioners and those who brought Him there is epochal and utterly unique.

He is thus the ideal man towards whom all men in their highest representatives strive to approximate, though none can attain. Where all other leaders and teachers have failed, there He has won through without seemingly seeking a goal; we find Him at the zenith of possibility whenever we meet Him in the records those who knew Him most intimately set Him forth. He is thus the world's despair of attainment, an embodied challenge to every soul within it. In the ethical and spiritual realm, He has

no equal, let alone a rival. He is 'the Person without a Fellow.'

(42) Though sharing in all that constitutes manhood, He shows nothing of that sin and consequent remorse and surge of penitence for ethical wrong and failure of attainment which stain the record of the best. So much so is He man at His unattained best, that some one has said He is not man as an individual but all men together, all men as they fain would ultimately be, and as God has destined that they shall yet be. That means, that accepting the view that the universe is teleologically determined, we have in the 'Historic Jesus' a life so unique, so inwrought with the highest possible qualities, as to constitute finality of attainment. Jesus is the goal to which all must strive if they would attain unto 'the perfect man'.

Jesus, however, is more than the Ideal Man: He is also the Creative Ideal. He is never seen as a static ideal, for He is wholly of the creative order. Jesus not only sets the ideal - that might have been brutal - He lends energies that afford some promise of attainment in the future. In I. John iii.2, we have it given in smallest compass: 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' Jesus is only truly understood when He is seen as man's Redeemer and therefore as the One who becomes the vital nerve of his endeavour, the secret of his surrender to higher redemptive potencies.

In this way, the work of Jesus is as unique as is His Person. For example, He redeems man from Nature, by revealing that man

cannot be understood from below but only from above, i.e. by way of the Creator as revealed in Jesus and not by the processes manifested in the creation.

Again, Jesus rescues man from man, in denying to any man a final excellence which might be set up as an ultimate standard; as refusing also to permit man satisfaction through fellow man. God alone can satisfy the human heart.

Further, Jesus rescues man from the bane of 'fate', by revealing the Father as the final Lord of life, and the 'home' at which man is to arrive. 'Fate' and Jesus never dwell together.

Jesus therefore has a stance of spirithood so unique as to suggest transcendence to any heart that has come within His influence. It has been asked whether, in the light of the theory of evolution, the day may not come when some other 'son' of the Father will not only attain unto Jesus' measure but surpass Him? The answer which faith supplies is, that all along the road leading to the ideal we arrive only in Jesus; it is He who supplies us with all the means unto attainment. At the last, if ever we attain, we shall still be dependent upon Him who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life'.

iii. Jesus is the embodiment of the future, i.e. Christian eschatology, in the last analysis, is but veiled Christology. As the 'Last Things' will be dealt with fairly exhaustively in the second half of this chapter, an outline as to personalisation may suffice here.

Jesus centred every vital phase of the unknown in Himself, and taught that destiny was determined by man's response

to the revelation grounded in Himself. He taught that God's action, then being carried through in Him, transcended every national or individual dream, messianic and otherwise.

Yet in outward seeming He became as failure itself. We may hang the cross on belt and chain, or adorn our church steeples, and it may embody the loftiest ideal symbol in the present era; in itself, nevertheless, it was the most infamous 'gallow's tree' of the ages. Further, the two main strands of life's crucial failure are sin and death within its grip. Sin is moral death; death is of a darker order when it follows as sequence. When Jesus died on the cross, not a few must have thought that He was necessarily accursed. It is true that Jesus has a relation to both at their deepest levels, yet now we know that 'He tasted death for every man', that He might redeem the race. Thus, so Paul thinks, 'He was made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him'.

He is therefore seen as the fructification of failure. Herein it is seen that on the issue of the Cross, God must needs have been inexorable. His Son must prove Victor in the ageless contest with sin, not its crowning Victim. The disciples claim - and their altered life and influence over their time and world must be weighed in the balance against a disclaimer - that as Life itself He rose from out His grave, thus death died in Him, and that He ascended to be the Lord of Glory. It has since been the beacon-light of hope all down the long years. It is just here, they claim, that God the Father has resolved the dissonance created by the Cross. If true, then it is transcendence itself; if

not true, then life has lost its greatest ethical demonstration, sin and death yet hold Him as victim, His own faith in God and His expressed word on the matter are illusory, and faith dies in this world where up till now His word has been as a light upon the darkest roads.

The action of Jesus, however, over the centuries, cannot be missed. If a dead man, who was also the most-misguided dreamer of all ages, is responsible for all that Jesus has done, then death is more potent than all life put together. The argument surely is that the word of the disciples is genuine, -Jesus rose and immediately began to reign, though 'as yet we do not see all things put under Him'. But He has flung His light within every dark chamber of life and death, having opened each one unto His coming.

All such illumines the greatest word ever uttered on eschatology: 'Because I live ye shall live also'. Here we mark that eschatology is but veiled Christology in the sense that as the former unfolds itself, the hidden depths of vital Christology will lie disclosed. This however is the simplest affirmation of the humblest Christian believer. He pins His whole future to the perseverance of Jesus Christ, and His love towards him. The believer is only lost, if Jesus be wrong.

This is the supreme fact which seems adequate to the faith of the Christian heart, viz. that when the Father raised His Son from sin's treachery and the grave, that Son rose in final and acquired power over sin's guilt and moral bondage and life's gravest fears, and seated Himself at the Father's

right hand 'a Prince and a Saviour'. There He is the embodied pledge that all His own shall share in His victory. He is therefore the Alpha and Omega of all that is to be, whether terrestrial or celestial. Thus He is (not has) the last word on Nature's travail, on our bondage to transient things, on sin and sorrow. Our very immortality is assured in virtue of our present redemption through Him, since having wrought this for us, He may be utterly trusted to complete what has cost Him so keen a sacrifice. He is King therefore of this present order, as well as of that farther shore.

There is an infinite mercy in the declaration that this Son of Man has been appointed through His cross as our Final Judge. The Man with the Pierced Brow is to judge our sinful mind; the Man with the Pierced Feet is to judge our ways; the Man with the Pierced Hands is to judge our actions; the Man with the Pierced Heart is to judge the love as well as the lust of our hearts. What a mercy, yet what a judgment, since He will read us experimentally from within. Yet He who has shared our blood stream will know the temptations we have fought against, as well as those to which we easily yielded.

Jesus is the embodiment of the future, and the outworking of the most distant and the most exhaustive eschatology will be but our deeper reading of the mystery and the wonder of His personality. Eschatology is Christology, since God willed that we be saved and not damned. Thus if Christ means life to us now, then the future can only mean more life and deeper. Our future is but the extension of His limitless mercy which is grace.

B. Eschatology as Veiled Christology, or Christ as the Lord of the 'Last Things'.

The New Testament has no speculative doctrine on the 'Last Things'. Neither the writers of the Gospels, nor those of the Epistles, set forth any abstract argument on this theme, though Paul somewhat approximates to such. Their position rather is a 'looking unto Jesus'. They all show that He dealt with the 'Last Things', both in interpretation and promise, on the basis of His own person and work. They were integral to Himself, and He unveiled their mystery to the disciple, as one linked to Himself. That is, in the last resort, they are interpretations of the fulfilment of His work, the carrying through of His purpose, the final assumption of the power delivered unto Him of the Father. The disciples give one the impression that He personalised them, so to speak, in Himself.

Such is our reading of the New Testament on this theme; and such seems, in general, to have been the attitude of His Church. 'Come, Lord Jesus' may serve as illustration. However elaborate her arguments may have been, in the deepest hours she has always anchored them in Christ. Moreover, the true test of any New Testament theology or eschatology is, in what sense is it truly Christological? 'He was on a scale which made the New Testament writers give Him not only a human and historic influence but a cosmic, nay an absolute. He was to command not only the race but the universe, and save not only the soul but the whole groaning and travailing creation.' (43)

The outlook of Judaism on the future in His day was uncertain. Eschatological development formed the chief development of later Judaism after the Old Canon had been closed, with a stress on the individual, but nothing tantamount to assurance seems to have been reached. That the future was still a debatable issue, the strife of the Pharisees and the Sadducees is conclusive; it split the ranks of the custodians of the national religion.

In the Old Testament there is to be felt the lacuna which marked the failure to reach any final thought on eschatology, save perhaps by a daring inference from prophetic experience which cannot be stressed. This lacuna was dealt with to some extent in the period between the Testaments, but with hopeless conclusions. R. H. Charles (Eschatology) has shown the general drift of the Jewish mind in this period. His own race, the Jew thought, was predestined by God to life, but the heathen world to death. The latter apparently had rendered themselves unfit for any other action on the part of God. It was not a case of leavening them through divine influences, or even of saving a remnant; in no sense for the Gentile could the righteousness of God prove redemptive. The heathen world unconsciously though surely faced its ultimate doom. It was therefore a determinism of the most drastic order. There could be no room even for repentance, as illustrated, for example, in the prophecy of Jonah; and no opportunity for such would be given. Even the 'sinners in Israel' would be lost when the Messiah should come; what room

then for salvation could be afforded to the Gentiles who were all heinous sinners. They were but brambles for the burning. 'Repentance would be of no avail were there an opportunity.' (44)

Over against this dark deterministic pessimism begotten of racial bias and a misreading of prophetic thought, Jesus was an incarnate protest and refutation. It struck so deeply at His heart that it may well have been an even deeper inducement why He so frequently went out of His way to consort with sinners, to eat at their tables, and prove indirectly their salvability. Others looked upon them as doomed when the Messiah should come; having come 'incognito' He demonstrated that they were potential saints, sons and daughters of the Almighty.

It is a mistake, it seems, to suppose that Jesus took the current apocalyptic thought and transformed it; as a fact, He dealt so hardly with it that hardly a phase of it has remained, save its insistence on the sovereignty of God, which far from being a determinism of doom is that of incredible redemption. When darkness can be equated with light, then can Jewish apocalyptic be equated with the eschatology of Jesus. He buried its debris, when He had wrecked it by submission to their sin in His cross, in His grave, since when it has never been able to compass a resurrection. 'It was on the doctrines of grace that His difference was so fundamental and irreconcilable' (45)

Jesus' attitude and word were epochal. He revealed a hope for the most sinful, while He endorsed every genuine inference that bore on messianic eschatology which did not deny

this fundamental fact of mercy and hope; the Messiah brings life not death, hope not despair. 'He disappointed the ancient hope because He had transcended it.'⁽⁴⁵⁾ But the especial point at which this transcendence took place was in His insistence that the eschatological kingdom of such grace must be read as grounded in Himself, and only to be read in the light of His whole personality, His cross and His resurrection. The 'Last things' therefore are the first things of Christological discovery; they inhere within the King; His kingdom of grace is the extension of His rule over the committed soul. Apart from Christ, so far as the New Testament is concerned, eschatology fails to secure pertinence; it is cut off from its vital rootage, and must wither, or at best struggle on minus bloom and fruit. Eschatology then is Christology; (46) it marks Jesus outlining the future as it is determined by God through Him, a note of such transcendence that it is no wonder many men are unable to settle down satisfactorily to its acceptance. Again, as with so many things, the ease or difficulty with which this is accepted is determined by one's conception of the Christ. That this note of outstanding authority finally turned the scales against Him in Ananias' court, seems indubitable; it does so still.

There seems to be a twofold line of thought in Jesus' mind as bearing on eschatology, and which has persisted throughout the centuries of His church. The first phase is an insistence on a present salvation, both Synoptist and Johannine, the latter especially. The effect of such is the soul's experience of being 'translated' into a roomier universe, a sense of peace with God,

a profoundly ethicised forgiveness, a realisation that sin's dark entail has been sundered, and an enhanced personality in consequence.

The second phase of this twin-conception which Jesus has left upon the page of the New Testament and upon the heart of His church, is that not only is He a present Saviour, but He is yet 'to head up all things' in Himself. Christ is thus a present reality, and One to whom all history points, and in whom it is to be consummated.

This is a dual process which no ingenuity of scholarship can delete from the New Testament, or gather into a single strand. Moreover, it is an antinomy from which no deep-seated Christian ever wishes to break loose. We are redeemed, they all seem to say, yet we 'look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.' This hope may die down low in any one age, but it is newly born again in another. The promise is always being re-breathed into some receptive soul or Church, 'I will come again'. And the answering strain is, 'Come, Lord Jesus.' We therefore differ from the word, 'We have found eschatology playing a great part in Early Christian thought and belief --- but it is not of the essence of Christian faith, this being rather confidence in a present activity of God and an already completed salvation.' (47) On the contrary, our faith waits its teleological completion. 'Salvation to John as to Paul is a present possession as well as a future hope.' (48) The New Testament bears clear witness to a present salvation, or 'eternal life' and the Kingdom which is to be; a passage from 'death to life' here and 'to be with Christ which is far

better'; the experience of the mystically present Christ and His coming again to sum up all His promises; the present timeless judgment and the final judgment before the throne. These antinomies are attested age after age, and the tide is again on the flow when they will be as much stressed as ever. The Christian mentality is built of such an order, and thus it thinks in such dimensions. That we must view such as rooted in our Lord's own mind, and uttered by Him in one form or another, seems indubitable. 'It is too great a paradox to maintain that what was so central in the belief of the Primitive Church was not present, at least in germ, in what the Master taught.' (49) The same writer says elsewhere, 'I am coming more and more to feel that to water down and explain away the Apocalyptic element is to miss something which is essential.' (50)

On the other hand, possibly the reason why so many scholars have hesitated to stress this eschatological element has been because of the riot of unauthenticated and extreme statements on the part of those deeply committed to eschatology, perhaps more than Christ Himself would approve. The balance He desired and urged must be maintained by His people, no matter how much one special phase of His teaching or work may impress them. We do well to remind ourselves of that wonderful reserve or reticence of Jesus; it is so inimitably in accord with His person; He is ardent but never fanatical, engrossed but never extreme, a visionary though never a mere dreamer; He builds the kingdom in the future, but never loses sight of the earth and its need.

He is so clear on the main principles, so sure of the general ground, but so careful to guard against pinning their faith down to time or place or circumstance. Many of His exegetes on both sides of the debate have lamentably failed through not appreciating such reserve. 'To take over the eschatology of Jesus is natural to those who own Him Lord.--- The cause of God will ultimately triumph--- .There is a goal. Thus far certainty; thus far, but no further. Knowledge as to the How, the When, the Where, is not ours. We can but trust --.' (51)

So difficult is this synthesis to our minds that confusion seems always to have attended the interpretation of the 'Last Things'. We must endeavour to maintain our Lord's balance on this matter, and refuse to be hurried or hustled into either camp of extreme affirmation or the equally extreme denial. We must refuse to scrap either phase of our Lord's teaching, remembering that 'the first thing in the Gospels is this conception of the 'last things'. (52) 'In short we have to say that because Christ died the Judgment is past, and because He lives among us the Kingdom is already here; and yet also that, because sin and wrong continue to thrive, the Lord's appearing is to be awaited, the kingdom still to come.' (53)

In the Synoptists eschatological teaching has almost wholly a future aspect, while the Johannine is rather that of a timeless nature; it is more mystical. Together they present an antinomy which is inescapable. In the former the dispensational aspect is stressed; it is otherwise with the latter - the man in Christ has arrived. It is another instance of the fact that Jesus'

thought on this issue, as the truth of His own person, always struggled with spatial and temporal categories which necessarily were too imperfect to express fully His vision and the inmost essence of His revelation. 'Throughly to connect these two in a complete system of eschatology is a task for which our theology is confessedly incompetent.'

Our need therefore is the discovery of a nexus capable of holding this antinomy within itself, negating neither phase of its reality. It seems to lie in Jesus' faith in and experience of God, as such is made possible for us through His spirit. There Jesus knew His own rest, from out which He came to every appointment of the Will. There He knew what God could be to a human soul; there also He gleaned His purpose covering the whole of the future; there eschatology became teleology, the dynamic unswerving purpose of God. Such became also Christology, Jesus reading Himself in the detail and in the whole. 'The Father hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honour the Son as they honour the Father.' The timeless present, as also the untrammelled future. The future interlocks within the destiny of the Son. It was the Father's intimation to Him, and it is fundamental to any eschatology and Christology. 'Jesus looked into the future for the final ratification and consummation of the gift (sc. eternal life), but it was a gift already bestowed upon experience of trust and loyalty. The reality of the Reign does not depend upon the dramatic dénouement of the Apocalyptic Eschatology. It is the reverse. The future is assured by the character and purpose of God as already manifested in His mission

and personality.' (54)

The validity of such a nexus is seen in that one fails to find any vital teleology, as enshrined in a genuine eschatology, in a pantheistic faith; it necessitates a theistic faith, and one on the scale and amplitude of Jesus' mind and personality. The nerve of any such 'hope' is cut when the full personality of God is lost or cannot be postulated. The fact that eschatology holds in the Christian faith, and especially in Jesus' own soul, is because God is personal in a measure one cannot fully compass, to which our own is by no means comparable; further, because the God of Jesus' love and homage is Father, and Lord and Sovereign over His world, both immanently and transcendently. Eschatology therefore is the forward-reaching of Jesus' vision and hope, deep set as they are in assurance, being also the whisper of the Eternal Father within the heart of His Son. Indeed, Jesus could never have been to the world of faith what He has been, and must ever be, unless He had had an eschatology as high as the Father's throne, and as deep as His own heart, as fathomless as His cross. 'It is clear that only --- the theistic view can admit an eschatology. --- Both in form and content eschatology will be modified by the nature of the God believed in.' (55)

Eschatology then pivots on Jesus' interpretation of God as manifested in His own attitude to life and teaching and cross. It could not therefore be explicated by reference to the cruelty and doom embodied in the later Jewish apocalyptic, for the deepest word on God is not judgment but redemption, not wrath but mercy, not antagonism but love. Jesus lifted up every conception into the

light of the Father's providential and sacrificial love.'It is not man or men but God who here and everywhere in Jesus' experience and teaching is the beginning,centre,medium,and end of the whole of this final life.'(56)

We cannot however escape the paradox inherent in this presentation:Jesus' interpretation and emphasis upon the Father is at the same time an implicit,frequently an explicit,reference to Himself.For every reference He makes to God,He makes several respecting Himself; in the very hour He draws men to the Father, that same drawing is to Himself also. It was in this way that He redeemed the Christian faith from abstraction,by grounding their trust in His own person and work.At the same time,the subordination of the Son to the Father is complete and/perfect. Thus the Scriptures present us with no system,but a revelation; with no creed but a cross; with no solution of problem and perplexity but a Saviour.In Him we not only front God but dwell in Him. It is just here we arrive at our destiny,and know it to be both a present reality,yet which awaits its fruition beyond and unrealizable within the earth. 'Man was made for Christ and His salvation.That is human destiny---.It is the certainty of God's moral and eternal will of love for us,and of that alone.Faith can be confounded only if God fail.'(57)

It is readily conceivable therefore that the antinomy of future and present as given in the Synoptists and in the Fourth Gospel may be held as running back to Jesus' mind and express teaching.His words were called forth by incident and accident, by chance question of outsider and disciple,and one aspect would

commend itself deeply to one type of mind, the other to another; though both would be necessary to convey the full meaning and revelation of Jesus' spirit. Moreover, though the timeless aspect is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, it must not be assumed that the author ignored the more definitely eschatological. 'What the Evangelist does is to simplify hope by exhibiting the depths of its roots in redeeming faith, and to remove its feverish unrest. Christ is not merely expected, He is known; He is not merely the Coming One, He is present.' (58) (Cf. R. H. Charles, Eschatology, 36-)

The precise and definitive elements of eschatological faith as exhaustively Christological may now be detailed:-

1. The Risen Jesus.

That it was the actual resurrection which gave this Christological centre to eschatology can hardly be doubted. In the New Testament, revelation of Jesus as risen follows the account of the resurrection as it actually took place. Revelation follows the deed. This crystallizes all He had been to the disciples, all that they remembered of word and miracle. It is in line with all that Jesus has come to mean to His church.

If there is any basis for faith in Christ at all parallel to the Church's belief in Him, then Calvary had called for and known an express action of the Living God. On such a matter as the cross, if Jesus was the Son, then the Father must be inexorable. If no Easter-dawn came across that Hill, then what hope of the vindication of goodness could there be in the world? It seems as though the whole spiritual order was under challenge when they put Jesus to death, and a death of that order of shame. 'It is not

so much to prove that Jesus lives, nor yet that we shall rise again - both these would follow if we could be sure that God rules all. **Rather** it is because in this, the test case as it were of human history, we in the weakness of our faith demand a sign that God does rule.' (59)

Another factor making for belief in the acceptance of the tradition of the Church, is that the days that followed the actual resurrection we find that the seasons of the soul have changed: it was the winter of the soul, when He died thus, an arctic winter; when He rose He brought in the spring, and the springing up of the flowers of assurance and forward-looking hope; the dirge is changed to a carol; instead of grief we have the doxology of glad grateful song. It was an act of God, and it pledged the whole of the future in the Risen Jesus. He is now demonstrably Lord, 'the first-born from the dead'. $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ $\iota\eta\varsigma\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ Jesus is Lord. So runs an old credal formula.----- It is the response of the primitive Church to the revelation given in Christ.----- He is $\kappa\upsilon\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$ depends upon the true understanding of the resurrection. ----- The miracle of Easter is not the fact of the Easter vision, nor of the empty grave, nor the corporeality as a Thomas might see it, but the act of the living God, who awakened Jesus from the dead, which lies behind them all. In this Easter fact the final end of history enters in some way into history.' (60)

Thus, though we may not surrender any concomitant fact that emerges in the records of Easter, we must neither admit that the action of God was purely fortuitous, nor that the resurrection is

bound up and circumscribed by the physical factors. The action of God was not fortuitous, a mere matter of the immediate moment, called forth then and there by the deed of the hour and by the actions of men. It had to do with such, but in itself it was anterior, and greater. We must see it as grounded in the sovereign purpose of God which entered into that hour and into that deed, but which was not determined by them nor limited to them. The purpose of God must be seen as moving on its way, whatever men may or may not do. The resurrection has a content which cannot be wholly bound up, either, with purely historical data, genuine and pertinent though these are, since that would commit this great datum of faith into the keeping of the historian. Faith sees Jesus' resurrection to be an ultimate act of God, with a physical setting but not a physical grounding; it belongs to an order that is super-physical and super-historical. It is the resurrection of the Son of God which is the faith of the Church; it is not that of the ordinary man. It is a resurrection so set in the eternal realm of the Divine that it will have bearing on all creation, as that of an ordinary individual could not possibly have. Some will call this dogma, but when was Jesus kept on the purely human level? If He could not be thus limited in life, why should not His death, and the aftermath, be different? 'The resurrection -- is the ratification of God ----. It is that which gives to it ultimate and universal significance, as the casual resurrection of an ordinary being could not have effected.' (6I)

Clear on that point, it leads to another, viz. that if we are to be true to New Testament interpretation we must not spiritualise away the actual resurrection. It is essential that we give the fullest possible meaning to Easter Day, not slurring over any datum handed down to us by those to whom it first came. That it was of a spiritual order, we have seen; but the New Testament presents it also to us as physical also. He rose with the same body as that which He bore to His cross, but with the touch of the transfiguring God upon it during death. 'O eyes majestic after death!' If we are to be true to the records as we have them, which took that early world with storm, we must not superimpose upon their witness a mystical meaning which, in standing alone and at the expense of the physical, would have been abhorrent to the original witnesses. In their pages the spiritual and the physical interlock, and we are not permitted to do other than accept such as the testimony of faith. Any other testimony would have left the Church in its grave at the foot of Calvary; it would never have emerged from Joseph's garden. 'The rising is relative to the grave and burial, and if we cannot speak of a bodily resurrection, we should not speak of resurrection at all.' (62)

It is not a matter of the success of an argument, and scoring a debating point, it is a matter of crucial importance. The whole Christology hangs upon it. If the poet's lines speak truth, that on His grave 'The Syrian stars look down', would not that carry, inferentially, that we may well be chary of any doctrine of 'the Incarnation'? If the grave still holds the body of 'the Son of God', what about the thought 'the Word became flesh'? If

rationalism is to have credence respecting the filled grave, why not admit it respecting the birth, that is, delete any express action of God as touching both? Paul says bluntly, 'If Christ be not risen, ye are yet in your sins'. It sounds somehow true. We must either admit and adore a transcendent Christ, or we have none save the human Jesus, who may well have been greatly mistaken. In which case, where is the Christian faith?

That eschatology is pure Christology, is again seen from the fact that the Christian anchors his own personal immortality within that of the resurrection of Jesus, and His ascension to the session at God's right hand. Jesus was more than the bearer of God's promise respecting man's future, He was its very incarnation. 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me though he were dead yet shall he live.' In Him their own persistence was assured. Before their lives would go down into darkness, the Light of the World must be quenched. 'The perseverance of the saints is another word for the perseverance of Jesus Christ.' (63) 'I go to prepare a place for you----I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.' Unless this is mere religious hyperbole with no final authority as reserves, the assumption of the Church which is implicit in these glorious words is that Jesus Himself is the sole guarantee of His people's destiny. There the Church of all the centuries has rested; why not therefore His modern Church? Are we any better, or wiser, or more assured of what lies in the after silence of the grave? Have we any other hope than that of Jesus? The

point is this: It is in Christ we are sure concerning the 'Last things'; beyond Him, in Gilbert Murray's exquisite yet poignant lines, 'the uncharted region lies', and there is no other guide, no other light. 'He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness', said Jesus, and how true it is in this realm of the after-silence. Apart from Jesus we have many a helpful myth and dream and hope, but where certainty? Where such men as Socrates failed, can we succeed? The old classical arguments for immortality are good, but being abstractions we cannot build reality upon them; they may be the Socratic 'raft', but again they may simply let us down. We are never sure when we are away from Christ. Some fallacy or other may tragically reveal how frail were our stoutest mental supports. Then, again, what amount of comfort is there in an abstraction when death taps a beloved or one's self on the shoulder? 'O, for the touch of a vanished hand !' 'To stand looking at a human frame from which life has just departed is to feel the futility of those elaborate arguments about immortality of the soul-----We are up against an Unknown which baffles our accustomed method of analysis and explanation.' (64) In an hour like that, so personal to most of us, to know Christ vitally is to see the grave lit up from end to end, the light deepening at the other end whither our hands are too short to reach, though its compass is more than reached by that of the Pierced One. From the whole of Deathland He has lifted all the shadows, but down all other roads there seems to be no enduring lamp, and the going is hard, and the way perilous for hope and serenity. We are left with Jesus, or - the dark.

One proof, it might be termed more or less empirical, that He has risen from the grave, is that faith in Him as risen has always been intensely creative of the finest order of character. His own people are hardly ever helped by argument - they seem to have more convincing evidence, and it yields ~~the~~ precipitate, the best quality known in time; it is the resurrection life. He seems to lift them up into the realm where He abides and creates after His own likeness; He brings joy out of despair, victory out of defeat. Conversely when faith dies down, ethical validities seem to be weakened, the old pagan shadows steal back, big things die. The greatest validities, both present and future, are bound up with Christ.

ii) The Ascended Christ.

The Fourth Gospel is explicit, and has the gravity of deep faith on this point. 'I go to my Father'. 'The glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' It is Johannine, but on the basis of the ageless faith in Christ, is it not inescapable? If He rose from the grave, then He must have ascended beyond earth and death, otherwise He would re-enter the grave in death at a later stage. The Resurrection and the Ascension go together, the one is the corollary of the other, and both inhere within the connotation the Church has marked in her Lord. Furthermore, it must have been a return to a former state of transcendence, since, as earthly, Christ may not be a mediator between the earth in its sin and the heavens in its holiness; as one among sinners he would need some one to be his mediator. In the last issue, Christology is as a seamless garment, and that not woven of earthly texture.

The fact is that if there is an eternity ahead pledged to us by Christ - and that is the simplest affirmation of the poorest Christian - it is because He came out of that eternity to usher us, minus sin and tragedy, into its life. Our faith therefore must centre in a Christ who is on the eternal throne, that same Christ 'who bore our sin in His own body on the tree'. Calvin somewhere said 'Totus Christus sed non totum quod in eo est.' Some feel that they must hold the 'Historic Christ' to be the 'Totus Christus', in which case it is frankly hard to account for the Church and its experienced redemption and its peace and hope. It is God alone who can save us, yet experience teaches that it is the action of Christ over us. Faith seems to grow greatly attenuated, to say the least, unless we can hold with strength, though perhaps with struggle, the belief that this Christ has re-ascended eternal heights down which He came to save us.

Again let it be said, this is not a matter of debate, for if it were, the issues would be but of ~~debatable~~able worth: it is a crucial matter for faith and its future. It can hardly be gainsaid, that an attenuated Christology is unable to measure up to the new struggle which faces the Church on all her battle fronts, a world-wide contest to the death. A Christ whose borders are of time and space is too small ~~either~~ for the past faith of the Church, and too weak to command a future faith comparable to that of the past. Granted the exceeding difficulty for modern presentation of an Eternal Christ, nevertheless it was harder for Jewish Christians than it is for us; and again, the fact of difficulty must not mean retirement from struggle, but rather the summoning of all available forces, not

the least of which must mean a fresh vision of this mysterious Christ, a more poignant experience of power over the soul, a faith of finer quality. In such an hour it has frequently happened that the newly committed disciple has seen something of the inevitability of Christ - He has moved as of necessity to a position in God and His eternity possible to none other. It is then seen that the exalted Christ as sharing in the eternity of God stands beyond the time of the world. His eternal being passes beyond the boundaries and the bulk of terrestrial time. ---- Either the Eternal Christ is lost in the historical Jesus, or the contrary happens. It all depends whether we recognise that in Jesus time and eternity became one; eternity passed into time: God's revelation took place in the world: God becomes man. That is the miracle of God's revelation in Christ. *Finitum capax infiniti, tempus capax aeternitas, saeculum hoc capax futuri saeculi*. If this assumption is not admitted, then the revelation of which the Bible speaks, has not taken place. For this revelation is bound up with events which happened in time ---- the revelation has a temporal side which cannot be thought away. But it has still another side. That which from our standpoint happened in time, seen from the standpoint of God happened in eternity. ----- For faith there is no tormenting contradiction in Jesus Christ belonging both to time and eternity; but it is only the expression of Him as true man and true God: in Him the Eternal God truly entered history.' (65)

It is a fact of history that with the departure of Christ, within a very short space of time, and according to His promise, something occurred which gave the broken Church a soul of such

dauntless faith and courage, that its wave-like effect is seen and felt to this day. There was the sense of extraordinary power, coupled with a simplicity of statement which is as naïve as it is strong and beautiful, marked also by a severe restraint whenever expression was made of it. They spoke of the gifts of an Ascended Christ, in the grace of which they broke down all opposition and changed the face of the ancient world. A small cause is not an adequate description of such unique effect. Only on the basis of the faith of the Church can the mind rest as at home in truth. That One, still dead, should compass such a task, asks more from the thoughtful mind than faith asks. We must account for the post-Calvary world, and a shamed and dead Christ is not adequate.

iii. The Absent Lord.

Faith holds that He is on the Throne, not because of the Cross, but after the cross. He is on the Throne as One who has the inherent right to be there, though now He has the deeper right on the score of sacrificial love, because He has borne thither the humanity He wore and in which He redeemed the human race to God. His waiting Church sees Him 'as a Lamb that had been slain'. He is there as the Exalted One, the Eternal Victor, the Lord of the Cross, the Eternal Son who stooped to be born into time and flesh and death.

He is absent in the sense that, as on earth, He calmly waits His 'hour'. Christ was never found as one mastered by man or circumstance: He came or retired at will, passing from security into peril, or the reverse. 'Mine hour has not yet come', expresses it completely. So now in the 'beyond', within His native eternity,

He waits the fruition of God's purpose on earth, the summing up of His passion for man. He is Lord then as we see Him in earthly ministry and on the Throne.

It is not however an inactive 'waiting': it is only due to the spatial and temporal defect of our mind and tongue. He who drove every issue of sin and sin itself to a head in His cross, is now doing the same with time. Everything is heading up for an apocalypse, felt in the spirit, but otherwise unutterable.

On the other hand, as promised in the Fourth Gospel, He has not left His people as 'orphans': He is present and operative in the Holy Spirit. As we saw earlier, however, the Christ who became $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa$ cannot be equated with the Spirit—along such lines the Church has never truly gone. The Risen Christ is 'explored' and expressed for us within the Church and the individual heart, such being the work of the Paraclete. There is consequently an experience which partakes of both, indivisible in experience though without confusion of personality. Thus Christ is absent as the Waiting One, yet available for vision and faith. 'That Jesus is our absent Lord is the consistent attitude of New Testament faith-----St Paul, whose mysticism is so often discussed, was as clear in his own mind as anyone else about the absence of his Lord. With all his sense of the power of Christ resting on his life, with all his straining of prepositions to express the intimacy of the Christian with his Lord, he never leaves us in doubt that the Risen Christ has His present abode at the heart of the Eternal.' (66) In her faith, the Church has always stood for this distinction, though she can discover in

experience no barriers, no clear dividing lines. She believes in her absent Lord, and she discovers Him and lives within His grace in the ministry of the Spirit.

-iv. The Coming King.

In the main, one of two theories has been accepted, often through assimilation to the predilection of the writers concerned, viz. the view that it is but vivid imagery to attest the final victory of the ideal as the purpose of God, or that the faith of the Church in Christ as actually coming in triumph is to be accepted as fundamentally true. Those who take the former view stress 'the transmuted eschatology' of the Fourth Gospel, while those of the latter feel more at home within the less complex pages of the Synoptists. 'Our modern Christianity has had to abandon those conceptions of primitive eschatology. We take them now as the vesture of the poetry of faith', more or less sums up the former attitude. (67) Charles, however, has shown that in the Fourth Gospel both strands are interwoven, present spiritual fact and a future event. (68) The eschatology of the Fourth Gospel was thought to have been weakened by pointing out that 'there is traceable a decidedly Hellenistic view' (69); other scholars however take an opposite view, e.g. 'the language and ideas at bottom ^{are} Hebraic through and through'. (70) Torrey, as we shall point out in the last chapter, strongly underscores its utter Aramaic character. (71)

What seems clear is that we cannot pit the Synoptist against the Johannine; they have so much in common that we are only at home with our material when we see both presentations

held within the capacious mind of Jesus. One simply cannot pin Jesus down to one special formula: there was a range and an amplitude in His mind which could easily hold complementary views as expressive of the faith within Him. The futurity then of the Synoptists as well as the timeless word on the Kingdom of the Fourth Gospel may well be seen as running back to His mind. Similarly the note of immediacy and that of long delay in the Synoptists need not be seen as cancelling out one or the other. Moreover, it hardly fits the nature of our data to hold that in the coming of the Spirit there was the promised coming of Christ, the King. Jesus never seems to have remotely suggested that the last word would lie with the Spirit; He is to sum up all things in Himself. 'He identifies Himself, in the last solemn utterance of His life, with the coming of the Kingdom of God; the coming of that Kingdom means His own exaltation and return in glory ---- the certainty of it is one to Him with His very being.' (72) Neither to faith does there seem to be any dissonance between 'soon' and 'far'. The term 'soon' on Jesus' lips must bear His connotation, the content of His faith and vision. We can only give it a spatial and temporal significance; but it meant other and more to Him. Jesus wholly lived within the thought of God. He speaks of the King rising to 'close the door'. It was as near as the will of God; yet it has a bearing on the obedience of man. He left the word 'watch', since His coming might be as near as the dawn; He bade His disciples 'do business' as though it might be long delayed. In both there is the thrill

that has never completely died out of His church. The King comes in His own time, and it is well to be ready. It not only makes for intensity, it creates character. They best live who steadily watch. This is the reason why a mighty teleology has always followed in the wake of the Christian Church. For now it is felt that teleology is Christology: Jesus is working out the long sure issues of God. Granted that the antinomies of present and future, of soon and far off, are difficult to resolve, nevertheless every age that has awakened to the discipline of this deep note of His return has put its ethical house in order, has lifted its eyes from mere temporalities to the everlasting hills, has known a re-creation of its earthly character, and has won back a decadent and failing world to God. There must somewhere be an austere validity that can accomplish all this.

This may well be the reason also, why, when the early-expected Parousia did not manifest itself, the Church apparently easily passed over to her long struggle with the persecutor, sin, and sorrow. The point is that ^{she} did not put her trust in eschatology but in her Lord. She trusted present and future to Him, and found Him more than able. She waited for Him. Did He delay? Then it was His supreme wisdom to do so, and happy would they be who could keep the tryst of faith during the intervening years. She knew that His word was His word, and He would not fail. In such an attitude the church stormed the world and laid its years at His feet. In itself this is great Christology; it maintained also a perfect eschatology. And it is not the acceptance of any theology or Christology, however penetrating or profound, which

keeps us Christian; we remain loyal to our Lord and Saviour only because He has apprehended us, and His hand is strong.' (73)

v) The Eternal Judge.

The inevitability of judgment seems to have been a strong element in the conscience and thought of all the major religions. The many volumes on Comparative Religion reveal the practical universality of such, e.g. Osiris, 'lord of life and king of eternity' (many dynasties before Moses) was thus held in Egypt; the Persian Rashnu, the Greek Hermes, on to the Jewish Christian Michael as the archangel of the judgment, seem alike to witness to this perennial ethical element in the conscience of the ages and races.

Apparently it has played no small part in the connotation of the Divine, the ethical strain frequently calling back the worshipper from non-moral conceptions of the Deity; on the other hand, the religious feeling has kept the ethical from becoming purely rational. Thus what Otto has popularised as the 'numinous' has been felt to inhere within both these intimations of the soul of man. Not a few thinkers see in judgment the origin of every great eschatology, and hold that it has thus promoted greatly the onward movement of history, in fact, its very conception. Certainly it all underscores the thought that God 'hath not left Himself without a witness' in every age. Many forms of judgment have been grotesque, and the growing ethical movements have compelled their deletion so far as such expression was concerned; but the principle per se was sound.

It may be doubted whether personality would have been so deeply ethicised had this sentiment of judgment not been so central to thought and feeling. Responsibility before a tribunal cognisant of the inner thought and life must always make strongly for character and its development. It creates the ego, and separates him as such from his fellows. Judgment, in the last analysis, leaves the soul alone with his God. It seems better to be damned as a man, than never to emerge from the brute.

It is a full-orbed conception when we come at last to the New Testament, and it makes a serious contribution to both eschatology and Christology in equating, within this measure, these two great issues. As with other Christological factors, in the matter of judgment the antinomy of present and future is seen in the Synoptic and Johannine presentations. Instead of seeing both gathered up in profound synthesis in the roomy mind of Christ, many scholars have ranged themselves on the one thesis, others on the side of the other. 'The judgment is taken out of the future', says E. F. Scott, 'and carried back into the actual life of Christ.--The old conception of a final judgment is replaced by the different conception of a present and continued action of Christ.--- John appears in certain places to approximate to the Synoptic views --. They must serve to remind us that John was still partly bound to the past.' (74) The careful work of R. H. Charles leads him to say that 'the final judgment⁷ cannot be otherwise conceived than as the recognition and manifestation of judgment already exercised

as life's sequel in the beyond.(75) More recent work on the Johannine problem moves away from Scott's position, e.g. that of Strachan and Raven. The former says: 'The fragments of Jewish apocalyptic in the Gospel are not to be dismissed merely as portions of the traditional teaching that he has been unable to fuse into the body of his teaching; nor as mere concessions to orthodox teaching. They are living portions of his own faith ---- the final judgment will take place.' (76) Not a few scholars are feeling that the Fourth Evangelist meant his eschatology to be taken seriously.

What is here stressed is the fact that no ingenuity can possibly delete this twin-element from the Fourth Gospel. This points us back to the presence of practically the same thing in the Synoptists. Jesus is in Himself incarnate and final judgment. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate these two strands. Sin is judged whenever the sinner is confronted by Christ; also, since sin persists, the word of final judgment is true to reality. Conscience, universally, seems to agree. Especially did Jesus establish judgment at His cross as a present reality, but in so doing He revealed that it possessed profound teleological value, pointing to a goal when sin would be for ever dealt with on the scale of God wholly intent upon its extinction. One who can centre this awesome reality in His own Person must be transcendent. 'The key to history is the historic Christ above history and in command of it.' (77)

The two facts of judgment are clear: a persistent judgment, and the long orbit of God's will finally gathered up in Christ. The

Christian heart gives its homage to both, finding no inconsistency in so doing, hence no one has ever been able to sin lightly once it has been accepted. If there was that in the world which necessitated His advent and cross, and still persists in its rebellion against God and His Christ, then it is that which must await and finally face the ultimate judgment of God in Christ. On the question of sin, God cannot be negligent. That judgment is not always immediately full-orbed and wrought out fully in any given hour, does not lessen the gravity of sin, since it points to the righteousness of God which must exact that sin pay the uttermost farthing. On this ultimate ground life and holiness are assured; other than this, sin and death might have the last word. Judgment secures that from this total tragedy God is bent on saving His world. It is this august Christian factor which has swept away every ethnic basis of judgment, leaving sinful man to the sovereign mercy of the grace of God; for though God must see to it that wrong answer to its smallest and greatest ingredient, and thus it may well be that some phases of life must 'cry to the rocks and the hills to fall upon them and hide them from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne', nevertheless, man sees in the cross that 'God has doomed man to salvation'. It is both safe and well to live fronting 'the Great White Throne' and its Christ. One can hardly envision a greater fact of eschatology, so Christological is it seen to be. 'If the revelation of the grace of the Lord Jesus involved judgment in the present and the future, the retribution was ethicised by the grace.' (78)

The paradox is that such inevitable judgment ensures the utter safety of the repentant and committed soul. He commits himself in his sin to that 'wrath' in the Divine which can make no terms with sin save for its destruction, which cannot endure it, against which it is 'a consuming fire'. Thus that same wrath takes sides with the nobler elements in the sinner, and together they front the sin 'which doth so easily beset' the soul. It is indeed the sinner's basic hope that by no fraction will the Holy One cease to be against sin, even though it may demand a fiery baptism for the sinful soul. He is most of all our Saviour when, with His cross, His anger flames against the sin which creates His and our problem, which even necessitated His cross. Nor is it the least mercy of the Father, that the Son of Man is to judge the sons of men. We are to be judged as on our native heath, yet by One who kept Himself free from its tragedy and darkness. It is, however, His final mercy towards us, that He has committed all judgment unto the Son.

vi) Jesus as the Object of Faith.

Our eschatology as well as our Christology leaves us at the same point - Jesus is the supreme object of the soul's faith. The confession at Caesarea Philippi, 'Lord, to whom can we go, Thou hast the word of eternal life' sums up the whole confession of the Christian heart in all ages. Apart from Jesus nothing is sure. 'In the last resort, the New Testament apologetic turns on the simple issue of the claim of Jesus Christ to the world's faith and obedience.' (79) When a man is prepared to stake his

all in life and death that Christ means everything to him, he is in the long line of the vital exegetes to whom the mysteries of Christ yield their otherwise hidden meaning. Not to all minds, even the most scholarly, does Christ declare himself; one must needs be first disciple, then scholar, but the greater term is the former. "Hence 'the interpretation of the life of Jesus Christ in Palestine is a matter of faith.' (80)

It is here we mark the crucial standpoint for vision and valid interpretation. The soul that is to understand Him can only do so as one within His living fellowship, one whom He has lifted up to share in some possible measure the unique dimensions of His divine life. In the Fourth Gospel this is given in the imperative word, 'Ye must be born again'. Even so noble a character as a Nicodemus, with so searching and sensitive a mind, stands outside the world of Jesus until such an hour takes place. To the outsider the man beyond this fellowship of the newly born, Jesus is one on the far-flung historic line of those who have greatly influenced the mind and heart of the world; only one within can be found kneeling and crying 'My Lord and my God! ' It is the latter who has won through to the interpretation of Jesus who can only be understood from within. Some term this the dogma of intolerance - another profound mistake, for these would have all men cry as they have cried. The simplest word of attestation is again Johannine, 'We speak that we do know'. Surely this is the primal need of life, for we need more reality, not less, keener vision, not the decrial of what is already possessed. 'The Word that was in

the beginning was made flesh, and we saw His glory as the glory of the only begotten Son. This is the message of the New Testament, and a Christian is a man who lets himself be told this by God. A Christian is the man, and only the man, who in Jesus Christ hears this word of God spoken to him.' (81)

Possibly Christianity will stand or fall by such committal and interpretation. Certainly it will not fall because it is opposed by the world, the flesh, and the devil. These have always contested her advance, and as such have failed to stem her progress. These have never been the deadliest enemies of the Church. That 'body of Christ' has stood amid these tempests, unharmed and unafraid, and it is indubitable that in hours when these have done their worst against her, she has given her witness to Christ and has voiced His truth better than in hours of ease. In such hours Christ has revealed His 'mystery' as in easier hours He has been unable. Her worst enemies have been her periods of unbelief, when she has taken the world's conception of Christ, and has attenuated her vision, and compromised in her allegiance. Then 'the Gates of Hades' have had their will over her, and her Lord has delivered her soul unto war until she won her way back to Him, and His truth, and His final sway. Mitchell Hunter in his research respecting Calvin suggests that essential Calvinism 'must live on so long as religion itself endures', and he lays it down that it is all summed up in Calvin's crest - 'A hand with a burning heart in it, and the words "I give Thee all; I keep back nothing for myself"'. (82) Religion is its own validity, itself its own interpretation, and the heart of religion is Christ.

CHAPTER FIVETHE VALIDITY OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Until the period of Schliermacher, the Fourth Gospel was valued as of far greater worth than the Synoptists. Then a period of drastic criticism set in, until the extreme position of Strauss and his school was reached, ^{viz.} that the Fourth Gospel must be eliminated as a source of genuine data respecting Christ. 'All the friends of the liberal Jesus-research School together with Schweitzer appreciated this as a great merit.' (I)

This Gospel is now, however, fairly rapidly recovering not a little of its lost prestige, and far from being eliminated is relegating into relative oblivion the authorities that would have dealt thus with it. More than ever, the Gospel is compelling the keenest scrutiny and winning the greatest possible appreciation. 'The feeling shared by some of the deepest spirits is that the severe critical analytical school has been dissevering the dead body of Jesus - to the infinite loss of faith.' (Ia)

Four points therefore may fitly be dealt with, viz.

- I. Outer Validity - the question of its precise authorship.
- II. Inner Validity - the question of the authority of its main presentation.
- III. Perennial Validity - its attestation of spiritual reality through the intervening centuries.
- IV. Essential Validity - its presentation of Christ as the feasible solution of 'The Riddle of the New Testament.'

1. Outer Validity - the question of its precise authorship.

A. Was it written by John the Apostle?

i) Tradition: There is the impressive tradition of nearly eighteen centuries that John/did write the Gospel, and that it is therefore historical in the greatest degree. 'The verdict of tradition ---- is-- clear and unanimous.' (2)

the wide range of acceptance compels attention: Gaul, Rome, Carthage, Alexandria, and Syrian Antioch, covering as these sees do the whole movement of the Christian Church from A.D. 180, are unanimous as to strict Johannine authorship.

Their leaders, bespeaking Christian mentality of the finest order - Irenaeus, Tertullian, Clement of Alexandria, Theophilus, and Heraclitus - alike are as one on this issue.

'The evidence of Tatian', Maurice Jones reminds us, 'carries us one stage further, for he must have published his Diatessaron --- before the year 170 A.D. --- as forming a four fold Gospel.' (3) Sanday holds that 'Eusebius who is really a careful and candid person and has ancients like Origen and Clement behind him can describe the Gospel as unquestioned by his own generation and by preceding generations. ---- A tradition of this kind so wide spread and so deep rooted could not have arisen, if it had not had a very substantial ground.' (4)

ent. ii) The Synoptic records as to John's status.

It has been pointed out by several scholars that the Gospels do not reveal John as anything like that quality of genius which must be assumed in the author of the Fourth Gospel. Burney, e.g. considers that only a trained Rabbinic scholar on the scale of a

Paul could have written it, and he draws attention to Acts 4.13 as decisive that John was not of such an order. (5)

The extant fragment of Papias is frequently pointed out as saying practically the same thing, viz, that John was just an ordinary disciple.

As touching the quality of the Gospel, Streeter feels that the author stands at the meeting point of Greek and Hebrew literature, and that his Gospel is not the ipsissima verba of the historic Jesus but of the Risen Christ. He holds that in the author Plato and Isaiah meet as in an inspired prophet. (6)

It is urged/therefore that John could not ^{have} filled this manifold rôle, and that the Synoptic records indirectly affirm such.

Some very pertinent factors, however, seem to have been lost sight of in this denial of John's ability to write this Gospel. In the first place, in the Synoptists John is one of the inner circle of three, and was present with Peter and James on occasions when Jesus revealed some deeper aspects of His person than on normal days. This does not explicitly show that he was a man of exceptional ability, but implicitly it does suggest that Jesus found in him an insight and an understanding possibly lacking in the others. We must remember also that it was one of the three, Peter, who voiced the great confession of His messiahship, an outstanding moment in the ministry, as it was in perception. Now John may well have shared that with Peter, for they were much together, as the records attest.

Now if one of the three wrote the Gospel in his old age, it

would therefore be with the richest experience of such intimacy, and seen through the later enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

When we also remember that ability is often latent, and matures slowly, a not infrequent phenomenon in mystical natures, there is no need to stress Acts 4.13. Again, the influence of Jesus has been found to be the most formative in history, a fact which has not a little bearing on the question of John's possible development. If he lived to old age in such a quickening centre as Ephesus, meeting so many who could recall what they had seen and heard, and then at the request of the Elders there, under presumably the guidance of the Holy Spirit wrote the Gospel, a record of incomparable fellowship, need we assume that the early mediocrity would effectively forbid its possibility?

iii) Four points are essential if apostolic authorship is to be maintained. First, the author must be seen indubitably as a Jew. Second, he must have had his home in Palestine, especially in Galilee, though with good connections in Jerusalem. Third, the date must be approximate to the disciple's old age, about A.D. 70, since there are suggestions^{of} age though nothing of weakness. Fourth, room must be found within that period for so advanced a stage in theological development.

iv) In support of the first and second, Burney argues for the acceptance of an Aramaic basis for the Fourth Gospel, stating that Alexandrian influence is a disproved figment. (7) Others scholars have accepted this so far as the thought is concerned, though they felt that on the score of language it was not so clear.

As we saw, however, Burney is against John's authorship on the score of its rabbinic quality, and the word of Acts 4, 13.

Torrey of Yale goes much further than Burney on this Aramaic road. As regards our first point, he boldly suggests that the Fourth Gospel, in all probability, was taken out of Palestine and later translated into colloquial Greek. As bearing on the second, he refuses to admit that the Christology is of Ephesian production but is born in a Palestinian milieu. 'Each of the four Gospels', he says, 'is plainly written, at least primarily, for Jewish readers; no one of them steps out of the atmosphere of Palestine even for a moment.' Thirdly, as bearing on the date, he urges that 'there is not a word in any one of the four books that might not have been written within twenty years after the death of Jesus.' 'No argument from silence', he goes on to say, 'could possibly be stronger than that which tends to show that all four Gospels were written before the year 70.' He is as strong on our fourth point as on the other three: 'Even the Christology of the Fourth Gospel had been provided long before; what was new was the application - and the original and eloquent expression.' He excepts Chapter xxi from his theory of the Aramaic original, and thinks the translator of chapters I-xx also composed this final chapter, 'perhaps many years after the work first saw the light'. (8)

It is hardly likely that such an extremely conservative position will long remain unchallenged, but it is a further piece of evidence how critical enquiry is moving respecting this

Gospel. It is safe to say that it brings us nearer the ancient tradition than was thought remotely possible a few years ago; also it cuts dead against the extreme liberal-research school.

iv) Irenaeus and Papias practically embody the two alternatives of the Johannine problem.

The main value, perhaps, of the evidence of the former respecting the Fourth Gospel is that it is so definitely personal. Not a few writers feel that the scholar-boy attached to Polycarp must mark one who had a link reaching intimately far back into Apostolic years. Thus his word: 'John the disciple of the Lord who leaned upon His breast himself too set forth the Gospel while dwelling in Ephesus, the city of Asia.' (Adv. Haer. iii. 1. i.)

Along with this, as set forth by Eusebius (H. E. v. 14. 7), is Clement's word: 'The tradition of the Elders from the first is that John last, having observed that the bodily things had been set forth in the Gospels, on the exhortation of his friends, inspired by the Spirit, produced a spiritual Gospel.' We must remember, in this connection, that Eusebius was the first historian, after the work by Luke, to attempt to show the advance of the Early Church. Contrary to some, he felt some doubt about the Apocalypse, but in the matter of the Fourth Gospel he had no doubt but that John was its author.

Moffatt, however, lays much stress on the known unreliability of Irenaeus as regards Peter's shadow, and the date of the death of Jesus, for example, and urges that such a precarious writer must not be deemed strong enough to set aside Papias'

statement of John's martyrdom, backed up as it is by the indirect evidence of the gnostic Heraclitus, the first commentator of the Fourth Gospel, who actually mentions the names of the surviving apostles, among which John's name is not given. Further, as R.H. Charles later (9), he points out that the strongest argument against John's residence in Ephesus is that though Ignatius mentions Paul, he is silent concerning John. (10)

On the other hand, Molluth calls our attention to the fact that the contemporary of Irenaeus was Polycrates, Bishop of Ephesus, the eighth member of his family to hold episcopal office. About A.D. 190 he wrote to Victor, the Bishop of Rome, affirming that 'John fell asleep at Ephesus,' (ὁ ἅγιος ἐν Ἐφέσῳ καὶ κοιμήταί) 'Would he not be in a position', asks Molluth, 'as a bishop succeeding his own kinsmen in his episcopal office to identify without the shadow of a doubt the identity of whom he is writing?' (11) Certainly, Eusebius had no doubt on these two points, viz. that John was not an early martyr, and that the Fourth Gospel was the work of the apostle. The case, therefore, is not weak.

Moffatt pertinently points out that both Irenaeus and Papias cannot be true; one or the other must go. He feels that Irenaeus fostered the Johannine tradition by confusing the Apostle with the Elder, and thus threw the correct tradition out of true focus, which remained until modern criticism suggested its untenability.

In any case, the Ephesian tradition is so well grounded that it cannot be given up as a phantasy: a real, historical

figure, with spiritual prestige adequate to its influence and almost tantamount to that of an apostle, must be shown. The position is therefore still far from being settled.

v) Hesitation of Rome.

The most serious obstacle to its apostolicity, perhaps, was the reluctance of Rome at first to accept it as **Jonannine**. There we come upon a difficulty of the first degree.

It cannot be doubted that it was far from welcome when it was introduced to Rome. There were many good reasons for this. In the first place, the concrete mind of Rome was at home in the clearer and more human aspects of Jesus as given in the Synoptic presentation. For instance, had we only known Christ through the Gospel of Mark, and were suddenly introduced to John's Gospel, what other re-action than that of suspicion would we experience? And Rome was never strong on the metaphysical and theological side. Further, that Church must naturally have had a sort of implicit suspicion of any Gospel coming from Ephesus, a polyglot city worshipping Diana, husbandless yet the mother of all her children. When we recall that Mariolatry first arose there, and our aversion to it, we are fairly near the temper of Rome's mind. Again, somewhat earlier, she had had to deal with the Apocalypse, a volume, against Caesar under the veil of Babylon. Further, the Fourth Gospel seemed to be a defence of Montanism, against which Rome had fought strenuously. The Gnostics also welcomed it.

The Influences which made for its acceptance by Rome may be briefly sketched:

From time to time Rome had received the visits of eminent Syrian and Eastern Christians whose spiritual mentality would tend to foster an atmosphere in which the Fourth Gospel would be able to assert itself as a genuine portrait of Christ.

The epoch-making martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch, whose Christology was as lofty as that of the Johannine literature, (I2) must have paved the way to its potential acceptance by suggesting a Christ more mystical than that of the Synoptists.

But, as Streeter points out (I3), in all probability it was the Ephesian convert, Justin Martyr, who suffered for Christ about 165 A.D. who swung in the main the Roman mind to the acceptance of apostolic authorship. At first, he and his philosopher's gown and Logos doctrine met with suspicion, but heroic blood wiped out all such. In addition, Streeter thinks that by that time the agile Roman mind had seen the apologetic value of the Logos doctrine.

Probably, also, Rome under her bishop, Victor, was induced to give good heed to Polycrates' letter attesting John as author, since by that time there was a keen desire to secure every bit of possible apostolic work and witness, especially from their pen.

The question is whether the Irenaeus' tradition can be accepted; or whether the Papias fragment represents the truth, viz, that John was an early martyr. Burney thinks that the Asian tradition meets in Papias and Polycrates, and that not the Apostle but the Presbyter must be understood. In which case, at best we have only John's memoranda at the base of the Fourth Gospel.

B. Is John the Presbyter the more likely author?

i) In his favour:

In the first extant fragment of Papias, there seems to be a distinction ~~made~~ between the Apostle and the Presbyter; in the second fragment, he plainly states that John was killed (ἀνέβη) by the Jews, thus fulfilling along with his brother the prophecy of Christ regarding them and their own confession and common agreement concerning him. (I4)

Moffatt considers that here we have definite truth bearing on John, and that its acceptance helps to solve the problem of the Fourth Gospel, especially if we postulate a John of Ephesus, as the Presbyter of the Papias fragment. Tradition records that such an one lived with great distinction in that city.

Further, as we mentioned earlier, Moffatt considers that Irenaeus fostered the Johannine authorship by confusing the Apostle with the Presbyter, thus throwing the actual tradition out of focus, for after centuries of Christian thought. This would dispose of Irenaeus, leaving Papias in possession.

This postulation of an erudite and influential John Presbyter as the author of the Fourth Gospel at Ephesus, and at a later date than the Apostle would have to write, is held by many scholars as better fitting the facts than does the theory of Apostolic authorship. They also consider that it helps forward the true reading of Clement's word of a 'spiritual Gospel'.

Dobschutz, with others, considers that he must have been a Jew of Jerusalem, though his line of development was quite

different from that of Paul in that he had seen the Lord, and possibly had contact with Him, but not as an apostle. (15) Streeter, on the other hand, is of the opinion that he had only access to the Apostle John, or to his memoranda. (16) Similarly Strachan inclines to the deep influence of John during friendship or discipleship. (17) Burney, accepting Charles' linguistic findings that the Fourth Gospel and the Epistles are all from the same pen, feels that the Asian tradition as represented by Papias and Polycrates must point to the Presbyter and away from the Apostle. Hence, he urges, the Fourth Gospel (vide, 'ἡ ἀνάγνῃς τοῦ πρεσβυτέρου') is not anonymous. Further, he thinks that Irenaeus actually completes the evidence that it was the Presbyter who died at Ephesus. (18)

Moffatt, in line with Harnack, states the alternative: we must either accept the Presbyter as the author, he says, or admit that the author of chapters I-XX and the editor of the revision who also added chapter XXI as appendix, are totally unknown. (19)

Bacon, however, pours scorn on the Presbyter-theory as 'a higher-critical myth' in favour of an Elder John of Jerusalem whom he claims to have proved in his literary output on the Fourth Gospel. (20) Yet he argues for an early tradition. 'Our Ephesian Evangelist', he says, 'looks back beyond Paul, beyond Philip, to a gospel tradition, which however late, however marked by evidences of struggle against Gnostic heresy, bears in its body the marks of the Lord Jesus.' (21) In an earlier and much larger volume, he holds that 'we are driven unavoidably to the

alternative -either Synoptics or John.--Both cannot be true.'(22)
 Burkitt is somewhat of the same opinion, in that if we go to the Fourth Gospel to learn the course of events, we shall only be disappointed - ideas not events were to the author the true realities.(23)

Bernard has a more subtle view which he considers better harmonises the two diverse aspects of the problem. With many other scholars, he holds that there is a good deal of historical data in the Fourth Gospel, and that such must be held as apostolic. The 'Beloved Disciple' must be read as the Apostle. The Gospel, however, as we have it is not his work, but was written at his dictation by a disciple attached to him. He is inclined to believe that this disciple was the Presbyter, the 'Elder John' as in the Papias' fragment. He may also have been the author of the three Johannine epistles, in the second and third of which the name 'Elder' as author appears. Thus as Mark gave us Peter, so the Presbyter has given us the memoranda of John. (24)

Unfortunately, there is not the evidence for the latter as for the former. As H.P.V. Nunn pointed out (25), Bernard admits that Irenaeus accepted the second epistle as the work of the Apostle. He therefore saw no difficulty in the Apostle using the name 'Elder'. 'Who is likely', asks Nunn, 'to be the best judge as to the usage of this word in the second century, Irenaeus or the twentieth century critic?' (26)

ii) Against the Presbyter:

Not a few scholars feel that the theory of the Presbyter

has lost ground on account of the critical findings showing that greater reliance must be put upon an apostolic foundation for the Gospel, and an earlier date than was thought possible some few years ago. If the latest position, that of Torrey, can be maintained against forthcoming criticism, then indeed are we nearer the Apostle and much further removed from the Presbyter.

A much earlier writer, Zahn, suggested that Papias only clumsily distinguished the Apostle from the Presbyter, and that we ought to equate the two references,

A further weakness is that we have no proof either of any John Presbyter or any writings that could be laid to his credit. Papias is the only authority for even the tenuous, indirect suggestion we have, and in itself it is ambiguous.

Further, it has also to stand up against I Peter V. I where the apostles are named as Elders, and Peter names himself thus.

Then again, the Presbyter must possess an authority capable of being able to correct and amend the Synoptists; he must be in possession of very accurate information, since where the Fourth Gospel differs from the Synoptists, the former is to be preferred; he must be one of Jerusalem, and, if not an eye-witness, at least so near as to acquire similar vision and information.

Such being the case, H. S. Holland feels that the suggestions bearing on the Presbyter do not equal even an equal alternative to the traditional hypothesis. 'They offer no account', he says, 'at all of what happened or of how it came about. It is simply a confession that if the book is not the Apostle John's, then we do not know anything about it; nor can we give any intelligible

interpretation of its origin and acceptance. We give it up. This is all that can be said.' (27)

Maurice Jones voices the thoughts of many when he says that the gist of it all means that the critics are at variance; and he goes on to say that it is remarkable that a book of such sublimity could have been produced and the name of its author to have faded completely out of memory, as it must have done, if the modern critic is right. 'I must confess', he says, that the authorship of the Fourth Gospel still remains for me an open question, but what little bias I may have is on the side of St. John.' (28) Canon Raven in his last book says practically the same. (29)

So far then as one can see it is a case of stalemate all along the line. Nothing is really clear. We all, liberal and conservative, await further evidence. In all probability, the problem will not be solved; Irenaeus and Papias to the last will each draw their own men.

C. The Ephesian School of Communal Authorship:

This school has been not infrequently mentioned as the via media out of the present stalemate. All things considered, it has been thought that the complexity of the problem suggests communal rather than purely individual work. Howard reminds us that Bousset closed his essays on the literary unity of the Fourth Gospel with the sentence: 'Perhaps we must accustom ourselves to treating the Gospel as the work of a school, not of an individual.' (30)

Practically all scholars are agreed that the Fourth Gospel must be assigned to Ephesus. This ancient city was a centre for long of Christian thought and activity, a strategic position of no small importance. That being so, as Christians congregated there, it is readily conceivable that in the course of some years Christian data of varying worth would be available, each Christian of note contributing his quota. Given in addition, such a dominant personality as is suggested by the author of the Fourth Gospel, we have one who would be able to gather about him a body of disciples of like outlook and thought. Thus with the pooling of all data, and with aid given as required to shape it into some measure of coherence, the possibility of such communal work as that suggested by the Fourth Gospel is conceivable. In Ephesus, also, the need of the Grecian world, and the driving currents of its thought and worship would be better known than in a place such as Jerusalem.

It is similarly accepted that the Gospel was written at the request of the Ephesian elders. Naturally, they would ask the greatest saint and thinker among them to undertake such communal work. Hence, collaboration would yield us that uniformity of language and spirit which are such marked features of all the Johannine literature. There seems to be no doubt but that all these writings come from one region, perhaps one school of thought and idiom, the superb gift of culture and faith from a community definitely Christian. At this great highway between Greece and Rome, the most likely place for this work should be seen. 'The highly characteristic style in which

the Gospel is written is uniform throughout and uniform also with the first epistle', writes C. Anderson Scott. 'On the assumption that three or more writers have contributed to the Gospel, this uniformity of style suggests that we have before us the production not of an individual only but of a corporate mind. Even if one of them were John, we cannot say with certainty what parts come from him.' (31)

Rendall Harris in his work on the Odes of Solomon has argued that in these odes and in the Ignatian Epistles we have definite points of contact with that style of thought which is found in the Fourth Gospel. That means, that men thought and felt after Christ in this characteristic way years prior to the Fourth Gospel. This has cleared up a number of debatable points.

Quite recently, C.F. Andrews, famous as the friend of Gandhi, in his book, Christ in the Silence, has happily suggested that the Indian Asram (i.e. the abode of a hermit or college school) might very readily be seen as typical of what took place at Ephesus. He thinks it may have been not unlike Rabindranath Tagore's Santiniketan where 'a revered teacher in his old age gathers round him a group of young pupils who carry on the great tradition of their master, one of whom comes closer in spirit to the teacher than the others.' Andrews feels that the critics might find a way out of their perplexity regarding the Fourth Gospel by way of this Indian Asram. He is of the opinion that out of such inter-communion

with John 'the disciple of the Lord', the discourses of the Gospel may well have been written, one of the young Grecian pupils having volunteered to 'mould them into a Gospel which should meet the questionings of his own day.' Thus, though 'the central thoughts are those of the Lord Jesus, carefully treasured by the disciple who had seen and heard the Lord, yet the expansion reveals the mind of the Evangelist himself.' (32) Streeter's thought would here have some definite pertinence: 'The Gospel--belongs neither to History nor to biography, but to the Library of Devotion.' (33)

What must be accepted, upon which the most scholars of non-extreme schools are agreed, is that underlying all else are the memoranda of the Apostle John. It is felt that unless we can stand here, then the personal touches, the precise geographical data, the evidence of the 'Beloved Disciple', cannot be explained at all satisfactory ^{if} to faith and reason.

II. Inner Validity: the question of the authority of its main presentation.

i) It has stood up to every critical test with cumulative enhancement of value. Today it stands in even greater honour than ever, more so than in the years when its validity was taken for granted. Fire can only refine the gold. This is a truly golden book. This result has occasioned a growing wonder, for the tests have been many and severe, so drastic that for years scholars have feared to deal with it save in terms of utmost severity. Yet it now emerges with a message deeper and more

authoritative than ever. There is an impressiveness about this. There is now hardly one to whom the faith is vital for life who would care to deny that the Christ of the Fourth Gospel is the Christ of the very heart of His Church -- the same Christ, and not another, the Christ of Galilee. The big difference is that the Fourth Gospel enables us to see further into His fathomless being, and to worship with greater awe. If this alone had been the result, its purpose would have been served.

It is high time then that we saw more of the independence of its author - he wrote for people who needed such a knowledge of Christ. 'I think it quite wrong', says Cadbury, 'to suppose that Luke or even John in writing assumed in the readers a knowledge of earlier Gospels. The new work was in each case intended to stand by itself. --- Each wrote a book to serve its own purpose independently and without regard to others.' (34) But this must not mean that they were mere adventurers, very much like our modern psychological 'biographies' of Christ, in many of which imagination has been often allowed to run riot. There is a reticence, and an awe, over the Gospels which reveal to the sensitive mind that the Lord Himself is charging the atmosphere, is revealing Himself. The writers are held by a greater reality than their kindled imagination. 'We must realise' says Easton, 'that our Evangelists were profoundly respectful of the tradition which they received.' (35)

The volume may be naïve in its style - Deissmann has shown that all the Gospels, the New Testament as a whole, is of this

~~this~~ nature - but not its contents or essence. Here are deeps where not only ordinary but profound thought is drowned. We are so familiar, however, with this phenomenon that we fail to realise that we have no plumb-line to measure it with. 'Who, for instance?' asks Charnwood, 'is this who thinks it needful to explain that He is not come to destroy the Law and the prophets? Our Lord is consistently set before us in this Gospel as conscious of an authority which is beyond any comparison that we can make.' (36)

ii) Indirectly the Fourth Gospel marks the historical origin and purpose of every heresy, viz. the attempt, sincere or otherwise, to portray a lesser Jesus than the Church has experienced and worshipped. Ever since the Church accepted the Fourth Gospel as a valid presentation of the Christ, this Gospel has been the greatest message contravening such lesser conceptions. Before such attempts can possibly succeed, they must first of all demolish the Johannine portrait. Again and again it has been affirmed that it has been done; yet as often this Gospel vindicates itself in the teeth of all opposition. It is the supreme 'apologia' against every heresy that would attenuate the majesty of Christ. 'If --- a highly intelligent stranger were to demand the essence of the New Testament in one book, we should point to John.' (37)

It may well be that in the future, near or distant, whenever we come to the study of the Gospels, we shall reverse our usual procedure, and not begin with Mark and the other Synoptists as our conscious and unconscious criterion, but with the Fourth

Gospel. Denny, as we saw earlier, noticed that the author of the Fourth Gospel went back beyond the terminus of the other Evangelists for the origin of Jesus; he could not rest until he had grounded Him in God. There now is the final criterion of every explanation of Jesus. It is a fundamental question for every Christology: Does it ground there, in God? If not, then it does not square with the New Testament, since all its books moved up into the Fourth Gospel, and there found each one its crown. Such is the faith that overcame the world. It is a moot point whether the future will permit any other faith to live - Christian or otherwise; that is, such a faith will not be able to discover adequate reserves and persist. 'Whether the characterisation of our Lord in the Fourth Gospel is consistent with that in the Synoptists', says Hodgson, 'needs to be turned round the other way. What we have to ask is "Are the Synoptic Gospels credible apart from the Fourth Gospel?" When we think of that tremendous Figure, the Synoptic Christ ----- we cannot avoid the question, "Are the records which tell of Him in any way credible apart from just such a life of inner dependence upon and communion with the Father as is presented to us in the Fourth Gospel?"' (38)

Is there any reason to doubt that the Church conquered because the Christ she presented to the pagan world was the Synoptic plus the Johannine Christ? Whenever she was called upon for her witness, it was to the Johannine Christ she witnessed most deeply - 'The Word became flesh --- and we have seen His glory.' Moreover, whenever that quality of faith

was lessened, the world over-spilled her borders, and she became weak unto death. Every other interpretation failed, as it must. 'Faith triumphed', says D'Arcy, 'by putting the highest possible interpretation upon His life and death. Every other interpretation failed and must ever fail. The history of all heresies is the history of the effort to find some lower interpretation.' (39)

iii) Its profound mysticality suggests the deeper guidance of the Holy Spirit. This note is more prominent, explicitly and implicitly, than in the Synoptists; though all the Gospels are due to the pressure of the Holy Spirit upon the Evangelists. Clement's noble description 'a spiritual Gospel', could never have meant that in order to get back to the historic Jesus we must step behind the Fourth Gospel, but rather that in it we are to see the fruition of Jesus' own promise, relative to the Spirit, that 'He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you'. We may therefore rightly refuse to hold as suspect any incident in the Fourth Gospel which is not similarly given in the Synoptists.

How pertinent the word 'spiritual' is, may be seen by observing that there is almost a wholly new vocabulary for the Spirit in this Gospel. The Synoptists have nothing like the same. John's Gospel, as Deissmann says, shows to us the Word who has again become Spirit, while the Synoptists show more the Word who has become flesh. (40) 'It reveals to us ---the Living One who is the Word, who is the Paraclete, with the Father,-----

who is the lasting atonement for our sins.' (4I) Although this suggests the equation of Jesus with the Spirit, nevertheless it is germane as regards the spirituality of this Gospel.

In this Gospel there seems to be a lifting of not a few veils from the face of Jesus, so that we can the more readily apprehend His significance, though there is still somewhat of reservation as touching the sovereign mystery of His person. This finer charity, suggests that over this writer, as over the chaos of the age preceding creation, and similarly over Jesus at the Jordan baptism, there was the brooding of the Spirit. As a result, there is a quickening of vision, with a simplicity of diction, a directness of message, as of one who spoke with absolute conviction, and thus had no need of purple rhetoric any more than he had of unbelief. 'We have seen --- we bear witness.'

Thus throughout this whole Gospel there is a sense of profound illumination; not a little also of the mystic's rapture, is also apparent. He is as one on the threshold of the illimitable, yet kept in touch with familiar things. He is in touch with the historical data of the Synoptists, yet he has also what is peculiarly his own, with a plus also in the grasp of inner significance beyond that shown by the other Evangelists.

iv) Its Relation to Paul.

The Fourth Gospel is often considered as wholly Pauline, hence the reason why it is so much at home in many of the Pauline categories. Not a few scholars would confine him to ^{the author} him to ^

Paul, and thus make him, more or less, servile . That, however, seems to go too far. A.E.R. Rawlinson, following Streeter, thinks that as the Presbyter he may well have been a boy in Jerusalem, and a disciple of the Apostle, hence the veneration implicit in the term 'the Beloved Disciple'. (42) If so, however much he may have learned from Paul, he is yet true disciple of the Apostle John.

We may perhaps be justified in saying, in view of the similarities with the Pauline Epistles, that, this servility excepted, he does stand on the shoulders of Paul, as one grateful to him, though himself writing on distinctive and original lines. Indeed, one would think such an one as Paul would demand this of one capable of achieving such a thing. In any case, the Fourth Evangelist is always himself, and his Gospel is his own inimitable production. The mind that thought out this work can be reckoned second to none among the sacred writers. The stamp of his genius can be seen throughout its pages. He has laid the Church of the Redeemer under an incalculable debt, and the years but seem to point it out.

As bearing upon his independence, he seems to be more daring even than Paul; that is, in his use of the 'Logos' as a definitive term for Jesus. Was Paul a little afraid of Philo, and thus did not feel free to dare the use of this word which naturally to a Hellenistic mind would point back to that writer? The Fourth Evangelist could and did. Bacon, however, thinks that it is so Pauline that a new era would dawn in the

appreciation of the Gospel were it held as wholly Pauline.(43)

The difference of real magnitude, however, is seen when it is remembered that the Fourth Evangelist gave in full what Paul only gave here and there in asides, fragments, suggestions, viz. a profound life of Christ, the profoundest we ever hope to have this side the grave. 'John makes explicit the thought which inspires Paul's Gospel, the oneness of the Son with the Father, such that as the source of religious experience the two are practically interchangeable.'(44) Where Paul helped men to see the transcendence of Jesus as his Lord, and led the nascent Church to launch out on such faith and its sequent experience, there John took a vastly deeper step - he revealed Him as in Galilee and Jerusalem, achieving the world's salvation directly through the life He lived, and the death He died, and the Risen Life into which He re-surged at the will and by the Spirit of the Father. That is, John gave a full-orbed presentation of Jesus as alive and redeemingly at work upon His adopted native soil. 'Paul's theology', says C.A. Anderson Scott, in an early volume, 'appears as a deduction from Christian experience; he builds towards it; it is an inescapable conclusion from what Christ has done for those who believe on Him. John starts from the other end, from the conclusion at which Paul arrives. He too finds in the facts and inferences of Christian experience the material for his conception of Christ, but he throws them into the form of a portrait of the historical Jesus.'(45)

Though it has been assumed that Paul greatly influenced the

Fourth Evangelist, is it not also likely that he influenced Paul? Certainly, Paul met the Apostle John, and it is now fairly widely and frankly admitted that we must postulate John's memoranda as underlying the Fourth Gospel. Further, Paul definitely states that at his conference with the Apostles he laid his own Gospel before them. To what extent, then, may it be assumed that they influenced each other? Explicitly, we draw a blank. We know, however, that Paul's mind was of an eager, tireless, questing nature, always pressing ahead to learn more and more of the Christ who had apprehended him. Would he not take full advantage of the fact that three had come more closely into contact with Jesus, Peter and James and John? Paul perhaps was able to draw upon that germinal mind of John, each mutually aiding the other to see something greater in Jesus than as yet had been seen. Undoubtedly, if Paul had never seen Christ - still a debatable point - then his intercourse with John must have been full of invaluable possibility. Paul would aid John by his deep insistence on the risen aspects of the Christ, and in turn John would serve Paul by relating those aspects of transcendence, half-known in their own hour during the pre-Calvary life, now more or less full-orbed. 'Much is said of the debt of John to St. Paul', says Nolluth, 'What of the debt of St. Paul to St. John? ----- I believe that much of the confidence in the formation of his doctrine of the Person of Christ which is shown by St. Paul, is due to his intercourse with St. Peter and St. John, and especially with the latter.----- It is probable that St. Paul received as

much as he gave---. There was mutual influence at work. Each Apostle had some share in forming the mind of the other.' (46) Whichever view be taken, it is evident that the theme deserves to be worked over far more than has been the case. It seems to be almost a closed book in early Church experience.

In the absence of definite information on the score of this mutual influence, it might be allowed that at least one reason for similarity of thought respecting the Risen Christ is that both Paul and John had been apprehended by Him, and that His hand over them both was strong - Paul perhaps only knowing Him in His risen state, John more greatly knowing Him in pre- and post-resurrection days with all their quickening issues, some immediately available for vision and understanding, others latent, waiting for the touch of the Spirit within memory in future days. Consciously, and perhaps unconsciously, Paul and John met here at the living centre of Christ, and under His redeeming touch and inspiration they grew to think together. It is often so today, especially where two or more minds are of the same calibre and order of spirituality. Jesus coalesces the minds which He redeems singly. 'It would be sadly misunderstood if John were thought of as an independent thinker ----. Most of his governing ideas represent just the crystallising of what was present, fluid, in the Christian consciousness'. (47) Now, was it not just these fluid transcendent factors in the experience of the Apostle John which were available for Paul, and upon which he must have seized with avidity? 'In the first three Gospels', Deissmann incisively points out, 'there stands before

us a figure of flesh and blood, in the Gospel of John an ethereal, spiritual figure. We know the figure. It is the Christ whom Paul had also seen, Christ the Lord, Christ the Spirit.' (48) At all events, admitting all the help that Paul may have given to the Fourth Evangelist, if we admit that the Apostle had not a little to do with the formation of this Gospel, then that contribution was anterior to Paul's Damascus revelation, and as such it still awaits further research. Happy will the discoverer be !

v) Its author's sure grasp of all his material.

Whoever the final author may have been, one is struck with his mastery and ascendancy over all his data, whether personal, Synoptic or traditional. This is borne out by the interesting discovery that the language of the first epistle is of the same order, though with its own characteristics notwithstanding. There are affinities as to style and vocabularies and ideas; also, as Moffatt shows clearly, there are real divergencies on each of these three points. For example - though precise details need not be given here - there are linguistic omissions; the epistle has terms peculiar to itself; there is no use made of Old Testament prophecy, except 3.12, due possibly to gnostic disparagement of such; a third divergence centres in the general ideas used in the epistle, e.g. the Christian relation to God; the Life eternal is pertinent, faith, sin, and the Holy Spirit also. Nevertheless, the affinities are so patent and cumulative in effect, that a decided measure of identification seems almost inescapable. The epistle therefore is a sort of criterion as to authorship.

As a result of such marked ascendancy, one observes that the speech of the Baptist, e.g. is as that ascribed to Jesus, so that where the one ends and the other begins it is impossible to mark. Similarly, when the author is quoting Jesus, and thereafter adds his own comment, the dividing line cannot be laid down save by inference. There is consequently an impression of subjectivity over the whole of the Gospel, as standing over against the greater objectivity of the Synoptists. The Synoptists, Manson states, can offer no parallel to this. 'They are objective in their manner of narration; he has passed everything through the refracting medium of his own mind.' (49) The same writer suggests that Paul's control over the doctrinal tradition which he received from the Early Church is the only apposite parallel to this refraction.

We must not fall, however, into the fallacy of supposing that the author has dealt with his material as he wished. Far from it is the truth. He may have sustained an ascendancy over his material, but that is so because prior to his mastery of such, the Gospel of the Christ had won the sovereignty over his soul. Paul was no more a δούλος of Christ than was John. He is therefore not a free agent and author by any means; rather, he is the willing slave of what has mastered his innermost soul, and what masters a man there, is the lord of mind and heart. 'Nowhere in the New Testament', says Hoskyns, 'are the writers imposing an interpretation upon a history. The history contains the purpose, and is indeed controlled by it.' (50) 'The author

of the Johannine writings, like St Paul, is faced by a riot of disordered religious romanticism ---- he has to prove that the Church is subject to ---- historical control.' (51) It must not be overlooked that he is also a spirit-charged man, and he writes not so much as he wishes, but as he must. There is thus a case of dual-control, viz. the necessity for a real presentation of Christ on somewhat higher levels than that of the Synoptists; secondly, the redeeming facts of His person and work. To doubt the utter sincerity of the author is almost to despair of truth itself. He is simply gathered up into his theme, and he masters the writing of it, as its reality dominates his own soul.

We may take it therefore that however much the Fourth Evangelist may have stamped his own genius upon his sublime material, yet as its prophetic interpreter he has been true to the experience or the tradition which has held such sway over his heart. His very soul lies bare in his pages. He can only be judged, therefore, on very high levels, and by his fellow peers. 'Primarily he was a Christian. This had made him what he was, and he has a piercing insight into the meaning of the early tradition about Jesus. ---- Whether he was working upon his own reminiscences, or upon that of some particular eye-witness, or upon additional oral-tradition, we cannot tell. In any case, he has mastered the Tradition. But he has mastered it as a Christian Theologian, and it is as a theologian that he wrote, and as a theologian that he must be judged.' (52)

It is on this high ground of definite objectivity, though

personally mediated and refracted, that we are compelled to reject such theories as held by Miss E. Underhill, and as given to some extent in her book, *The Mystic Way*. 'Here we have', she says, --- not the historical, but the Eternal "Gospel", seen in vision by a great spiritual genius who had realised in its deepest completest sense - as the Synoptists had not - the meaning of Christianity.' (53) 'He projected the Divine Companion whom he knew, in common with other contemplatives by direct experience on to the temporal background of the historic life: he selected from the huge and quickly growing Christian legend, those events which seemed to him like the types, the dramatic representations of the great wonders and changes which had been wrought within his soul. For him all was fused together in one poignant and dramatic vision of new life.' (54) - It is no wonder that on an earlier page (p. 216) she feels that it is unlikely the problem will ever be solved. Her resolution of the Gospel into mystic vision is as dangerous as it is seductive. 'The difficulty which such a view encounters', cogently replies Howard, 'is that it leaves the intensely objective character of much of the narrative quite unexplained. --- The fact is, that it was easier to regard the Evangelist as an ecstatic when the Reville - Loisy theory of the nature and origin of the Fourth Gospel was in the ascendance.' (55) E. F. Scott better states the main position, a swing back from the earlier extreme attitude assumed by some scholars, 'He seems to have access to a better tradition than the Synoptists.' (56)

vi) Not a little of its inner validity is seen when the prophetic quality of his work is understood. This Gospel could only have been written when the full creative age of Christian inspiration had been reached, carrying Christian experience of Christ on to its fullest connotation. Not only is the Fourth Gospel therefore the last of the New Testament writings, but it is the greatest and most sublime. It is the last big book of all Christian literature, and its like we may never hope to see duplicated this side time. 'John writes', says C.A. Anderson Scott, 'with the consciousness of inspiration corresponding to that of the ancient prophets.' (56) This is perhaps the reason why it is 'the most hallowed and beloved of Christian writings'. (57)

Now the prophet was fundamentally a witness not a theologian, though often he was both. (58) The perception of this does not a little to solve what has often perplexed many, viz. the inability to mark where our Lord's word ended and that of the Evangelist began. 'There is no such construction', Strachan reminds us, 'as oratio obliqua in Hebrew and Aramaic.--- To insist that all the words of Jesus in the Gospel once "ruffled the air of Palestine" is tantamount to insisting that when the word of God came to the prophet, it always came in the form of audition.' (59)

The apologetic which floods the Gospel is therefore best seen on this prophetic level. 'That ye may believe' is the 'burden' on John, as the message of the prophet had rested on him in pre-Christian eras. As the prophet, once he had heard the 'Word', was thereafter burdened until he gave it forth, so

was John until he had made it possible for his day and generation to believe in the Christ. All else is secondary to him so long as the Word goes forth to the hearts of men. It is on a parallel with Paul's great burning word: 'Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel.' In all probability, the Ephesian Elders only voiced but did not create the driving motive of his heart. Strachan feels that nowhere else in the New Testament is direct inspiration claimed so definitely as in the Fourth Gospel; it is 'in a fashion that has no parallel since the days of the prophets'. (60)

Here one feels the invalidity of the pure historian. This is an atmosphere in which he is more or less uneasy, is not quite at home and knows it, and the idiom of its inspired mood can hardly if ever be translated by him. He would if he could, but his vision halts just where it should be at its keenest, and his pen drags in the moment when it needs wings and a driving wind. He is an observer, not an experienter; hence he is an alien in such prophetic hours. These prophets speak with the tongue and in the lore of a law and a presence beyond his knowledge and experience. He may be able to grasp somewhat of the form, but the spirit is not amenable to control. Thus, valuable as the historian will always be, a man who tethers us to the solid earth, and holds a brief for such through arduous discipline, yet with all his great gifts, he is but a secondary authority in this realm where the historian-plus is absolutely needed. 'Once I was blind, now I see' may be history, but it is infinitely more. That 'more' is primary and fundamental, which if a man lack, he lacks everything.

'The historian of Primitive Christianity', says Hoskyns, 'is a mere hewer of wood and drawer of water; it is his function to act as the slave of the theologian and of the philosopher, as the slave also of the simple believer or of the equally simple unbeliever ----- The historian has therefore to make clear and accessible the material which has shown such remarkable ability to galvanize thought and faith and unbelief.' (61)

It is not surprising then to find that this Gospel is the finest missionary gift the Church has ever known. Every race into whose natural and spiritual idiom it has been translated has known a quickening of its life beyond description. Since it runs deeper than mere intellectual processes, it grips more profoundly and hold on beyond all else. It is this Gospel pre-eminently that has shown the fallacy of the 'Back to Christ' movement, i.e. that only the Synoptists are to be trusted. It was 'a false step from the first', urges C.N. Moody, 'for it meant that despite was done to the spirit of grace; it meant, in effect, that the second great event in Christian history, the coming of the Spirit, was set aside.' (62) Elsewhere, this missionary writer says that if we were asked by a thoughtful seeker for a book in which the gist of the New Testament would be contained, we should hand over the Gospel according to John.

III. Perennial Validity.

i) The Fourth Gospel is linked in spiritual history with this present hour. Passing beyond the narrow confines as to precise authorship, one big fact, pregnant with utmost validity,

is that the Christ of this Gospel timelessly evinces Himself in compelled adoration and worship and service through the centuries. It is almost one unbroken line of wonder, a line which has gone out throughout the world. It is without a parallel, either in meaning or achievement. Whatever final name as author the Church may attach to this sovereign volume, or if at last she admit that unanimity of consent as in the 2nd century is not possible, she will always find here the deepest confession of her faith. The word of the anonymous circle about the Beloved Disciple will never fail of abiding utterance, 'We know that his witness is true'. 'The significance of this Johannine representation of Christ', says Johannes Weiss, 'for Church, theology, and piety cannot be too highly estimated---.Wherever the "revelation of God in Christ" is spoken of, the Gospel of John is the standard authority for such a view. (63) '

ii) It is always spiritually impressive, no matter age or race or culture, and in a measure beyond all other records. Luke's Gospel has been termed 'the loveliest book in the world', and it is incomparable. But not even for that Gospel would the spiritual heart dethrone the Fourth Gospel. Happily, we are not called upon to do so. It would have been an infinite loss, had either been destroyed through the chequered centuries. Bacon summarising the traditions of Jesus along three lines says, 'The Fourth Gospel tells us not so much 'what the eye saw' or 'what the ear heard', ---- but rather what entered into the heart of man to conceive of the whole divine epiphany, the life seen throughout in the

light of transfiguration.' He adds significantly, 'Without the Fourth Gospel, it would be impossible to answer adequately the question why we devote such constant and intense study to the life of Christ.' (64)

As a result of such impressiveness, all the values of life are underscored by way of faith in Christ. Christ, and life in and through Him, are read sub specie aeternitatis. For example, if one could not accept the literal raising of Lazarus - and this involves the whole question of miracles, especially those concerned with the dead - yet, under the influence of the Spirit, to hear His words, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die', is to enter at once into the deathless meaning of life, with all the added enrichment Christ brings.

It is not the words, however, that vindicate themselves to us, but the Christ in the Spirit who uses them as the vehicle of His approach to the soul. Thus it is that John's conception of the Christ forbids every category of explication other than the supreme. John's contention is that Christ must be read in God, both as Creator and Redeemer, a fitting suggestion that He who can create, is able also to redeem. It is this note which Humanism in any of its forms cannot bear, yet which thirls the Christ to the Christian for ever as Lord. 'If the Saviour was but an emissary of God', says Forsyth, 'and not very God, we are not on rock even if we are off the sand. There is then no absolute

certainty of salvation for the race. And we must have that certainty for faith.-----No half-God could redeem the soul which it took the whole God to create.'(65)

Not even in the Pauline epistles have we a revelation of Christ as in this profoundly simple volume. As Professor Curtis said recently, 'This Man moved in heaven and earth, and the earth is not big enough to contain Him.' Indirectly, he turned down, before they were born within the human mind, the Socinian and Arian contentions, viz. 'Jesus a man' and 'Jesus the Superman', leaving only room for the Athanasian, 'Jesus the Supernal Man, the Lord from heaven'. That still stands, and each thinker is compelled to state why he will or will not accept such. It sifts us into our classes, and states our status, and leaves us very definitely answerable to God. That an unnamed volume written in Ephesus nearly two thousand years ago should do this is remarkable. Whatever be the name of the man who wrote it, and who died soon after, his book is deathless, a timeless challenge to the soul to declare the ground of his faith or unbelief.

iii) The Fourth Gospel therefore finds us at our deepest levels. The severe absence of rhetoric in this searching book is due to the fact that the soul of the writer had been awed by his vision. It holds the simplicity of the sailor who has gone down upon deep waters, and gazed upon the splendour of vast spaces, and retains something of it all in his speech and attitude. The far distances of unreachable horizons have had their way with this writer, and he can only write of what he has seen, and

as he has been apprehended, and as he has experienced. Such a man is to be greatly honoured, and not a little followed, though the full vision that dawned for him may not disclose so much for others. What is not acceptable, is that it be denied that he saw his vision, and that his message of it is not true.

The Fourth Evangelist was not daunted and halted by miracle, not even by the most astounding, for the reason that the Christ had absorbed the utmost emotion of his soul. In the Face of that One, anything was possible, probable, credible. 'Christ's character', said A.B. Bruce years ago, 'is the one miracle vitally important to faith. Believers could part with the physical miracles of the Gospel, if science and exegesis demanded the sacrifice, but if a sinless Christ were taken from us on the plea that the moral order of the world knows only of imperfect men, all would be lost.' (66) We believe in miracle, as did John, for the simple and perfectly satisfactory reason that we believe in Jesus. Miracle is incongruous to us as we are, but it is germane to Christ throughout the whole length of His character and work. His very contrast with our own stained life is one of the greatest lures to these pages. As perhaps nowhere else, we are shown Jesus' discontinuity with us in our sin, as well as His vital continuity with us in our essential being. It is our deep need of all He can be to us that keeps our lives for ever within the pages of this Gospel. 'With the possible exception of the Shepherd Psalm', says Howard, 'the 14th of St. John is the best thumbed leaf in the cottar's Bible.--- The--chapter was read

night after night to James Adam the famous Platonist, as he lay dying--- by his wife.---"Every evening I read St. John XIV before leaving him for the night, sometimes in English, sometimes in Greek." (67)

iv) It expresses therefore a timeless appeal, the compulsion of truth through radiant personality. Whether we are mystics, or the purely normal Christian heart which only in rare moments in the space of a life-time catches the mystic vision, there is that within these pages which exerts an influence over us from which we may not break away. It is an influence that brings us into the Ineffable Presence. As H. van Hugel has shown was the case in the fight of the Church with Gnosticism, this embodied appeal and influence win in the long fight with error. 'The Johannine writings,' he says, 'took shape during the earlier battles of the long war with Gnosticism - the most terrible foe ever so far encountered by the Church, and conquered by her in open and fair fight.' (68) This victory took place on the high plane of the unquestionably Divine. On this lofty ground, the Holy Spirit takes the essential things of Christ, and thereby reveals Him to the pilgrim heart daring enough to make Him Lord. As that claim is endorsed, worship follows, and life changes and deepens. Once that has been done, the Fourth Gospel attests the fact that it has come into its kingdom, for pre-eminently the Gospel is the most sublime revelation of God to men; one not easily given nor easily received, but utterly final when such is done. John's Gospel may yet be the rendezvous in the unity of faith of all the races, itself a greatly daring dream.

IV. Essential Validity, viz. that its presentation of Christ is the feasible solution of 'The Riddle of the New Testament.'

There has been a great deal written on 'the problem of the Christ' and 'the problem of the New Testament', but it would be nothing less than tragedy if the revelation of Christ only added another insoluble problem to life, instead of proving the solution of the problems that already attend life. Nevertheless, in one sense, Jesus is Himself a problem to us, since He is so unlike us in a number of ways, especially in the non-presence of sin in His life.

On the other hand, if the Fourth Gospel can be accepted as a true reading of Jesus' life, immediately He becomes the incarnate solution of our major problems, lifting from the face of life its deepest darknesses, and giving us vision and hope. The value, in that case, of the Fourth Gospel would be simply incalculable. Because of this potentially pivotal value 'liberal and conservative scholars', as Hoskyns^{says}, 'have been on edge whenever the authorship of the Fourth Gospel has been raised.' (69)

i) The Fourth Gospel assumes such a value, and forwards such a solution, by making it clear that Jesus is adequately understood only when He is seen to stand within the dimensions of God. But this must not be taken as assuming that the Fourth Gospel alone takes this position, but rather that none of the other Gospels does so to the extent and clarity of the Fourth. This last Gospel lifts up the scattered hints and foregleams respecting Christ found elsewhere, and shows their larger

pertinence in its own deeper light. It is the insistence of the Fourth Gospel throughout on the transcendent Christ which most distinctly stamps its creative quality for Christian faith and experience.

That this trait of transcendence constitutes the quint-essence of mystery may readily be accepted. But so is the entire Christian faith. It is grounded neither in space nor time, but only in God, and in God revealed in Jesus Christ as He had never before been made manifest. It is that or nothing. It has been clear for some time that there are two conflicts, viz. Humanism or a very high Christology. The Fourth Gospel has nothing to do with the former, but sides wholly with the latter. It is this mystery in the Gospel which is so disconcerting to the pure historian, but so heartening to the Christian, the reason being that it only seems to yield up its meaning as one enters Christ's fellowship of redemption. 'Upon such committal, as the ages have verified, this mystery becomes ineffable revelation.' This does not come about as in earlier times by prophetic inspiration; Christ is Himself the revelation He brings. This is the reason for the absolute claim of the Christian faith: there can be no second Jesus. Yet because Jesus is transcendence itself, it is difficult for the average man to accept Him as such. Sometimes the mind verges on heresy while the heart whispers its own contentment with the orthodox faith. We seem at times to be intellectually Arian even when spiritually we side with Athanasius. 'The Word was with God, and the Word was God' and 'the Word became flesh' is as hard a proposition to accept, as it is most illuminating and

and inspiring when through faith we share its wonder. 'All the Incarnation doctrines point to the same conviction that Jesus does reveal God.' (70)

ii) Only a transcendent though human Christ is adequate explanation of the Church's faith and history. Nowhere in the Synoptists is the humanity of Christ emphasised as in this Gospel, yet, on the other hand, the Christ of St. John is so transcendent as to stand beyond any language or any definition. It is the Gospel of a Man who beyond all others gathered up the essence of humanity within Him, because He was man as God originally must have intended man to be. Nevertheless, though 'very man of very man', He is found to have the heavens as His far horizon. That His disciples more often misunderstood than understood Him, seems to have been inevitable. They needed the resurrection, and the after-ministry of the Spirit to make Him clear to them. Nor has such been confined to the Early Church. 'It was from the standpoint of -- the Resurrection that the friends of Jesus looked back---. By itself---the life led nowhere. It handed them indeed only to despair. Their intercourse with Him had only been one of deepening and darkening mystery. They had known that He was certainly and entirely human--- but always He had been something more, and that was the mystery about Him.-----Only from the standpoint of faith in Him as declared to be the Son of God by the Resurrection does the record of the Ministry cohere.--- "Aut Deus aut non bonus homo" .' (71)

Whenever or wherever Jesus is met with, the same phenomenon repeats itself. Somehow or other, fight against it as we may,

Jesus never yields up the mystery within Him for solution save on transcendent levels, as One within the dimensions of God. This is the message of the New Testament which has made it the most solitary historical book in the world. Now the major thesis of the Fourth Gospel is essentially on all fours with the New Testament as a whole, and our acceptance or rejection of it will depend^{on} whether we can hold to or must deny that Christ can only be understood as transcendent. Over against such a pregnant and decisive position, the outer validities of date, actual authorship, and other collateral matters, are pure subsidiaries. The point is that in all probability the Church of the future stands or falls by such a presentation. If He be not One wholly from God's side, as One standing with God over against humanity, yet who consented or willed to be born for man's redemption, then the Church has grievously mistaken His word (or He has greatly over-estimated His claims), has grossly over-valued her religious data and experience, has out-reached the proximate hope He gave her, and is therefore an unreliable guide on the hazardous roads that slope between man and his God. She must be thrust aside until such time as she can, if ever she can, better state what religious truth is. But can that be justly levelled against the Church? Is it fitting, to say the least, to assume that the Early Church was over-eager to give the loftiest claims to Jesus Christ? Is it not the exact contrary? The Church yielded to spiritual pressure His very presence had brought to bear on her. His cross hurled her to utter despair; while His

Resurrection thrilled her through and through with hope and joy beyond telling. But even then, she did not go much further than the Messiah, wonderful as that was to the Jewish heart. It was the ministry of the Spirit that 'stabbed her broad awake', and she knew as only such people can, that in Jesus God was redeeming His lost people back to Himself. Credulity is the last word to be flung against that tiny mass of people who for His sake stood out against the early world and won hands down. 'If the followers of Christ', says C.A. Anderson Scott, 'hesitated for two generations to give their Master the name of "God", we may claim that when they did so it was because they could give no other. It was indubitably no empty title that the Church bestowed. It had bowed to Him heart and mind and will, as well as knee. --- It claimed for Him all that men had ever claimed for God.' (72)

This same thoughtful writer on the fly-leaf of his book as an indication, presumably, of its contents, quoted the great lines of Augustine: 'Christus homo habitus Christum Deum sua sponte adducet' This is a great word, and for the inner Church in every age there has been no lesser word.

It is the position of the Fourth Gospel, summing up as it does the main tendencies and express words respecting Christ throughout the New Testament. And Muirhead has cogently reminded us that we shall not escape our 'Riddle' by throwing John to the wolves. The denial of the transcendent emphasis in the Fourth Gospel must similarly involve a like denial in Paul, the Synoptists, the Acts of the Apostles, Hebrews, in fact the denial of that

lone, austere quality in Jesus which marks Him off from all other men, the genius included, and which denies as adequate a mere humanitarian significance. This eternal quality in Jesus is the golden thread which binds the whole of the New Testament books together, and constitutes it a unity unique in literature and in religion. Delete it, and the whole falls to pieces; you are left with your mystery, minus its sovereign solution. In which case, it is frankly hard to see how the Church in the future will be able to stand up against the titanic forces which beset her on every side. The old word comes back again with redoubled force: *Nisi Dominus frustra.*

iii) The Fourth Gospel therefore is an inspired and embodied polemic against an attenuated Christ, against any category being applied to Him less than the Divine, and accepted as ultimate. It is the 'apologia' of the early Christian centuries, as it must be at this present very critical hour. In this Gospel we have an implicit passionate appeal to see the grace and glory of the Incarnate Word that came from God to men. Undoubtedly devotion is quickened by the unequivocal acknowledgment that God in Christ has broken in upon His race redeemingly. 'The Eternal became Historic, and that Historia is - Jesus of Nazareth.'

The Fourth Gospel, it is true, marks an advance on the more relatively historical data of the Synoptists, and even on some issues of Paul, e.g. the Logos, but it is not an advance of mere conjecture or abstract speculation, still less of caprice, but of inner interpretation. 'Any who would know the Master's mind', says

Anthony Deane, 'cannot suffer himself to be robbed of the Fourth Gospel, or to believe that the other three alone can be taken to enshrine the authentic words of Christ.' (73) The Christian soul values the cadences of all the Gospels, but the heart of the Church loves as none other this Gospel. This is in itself a suggestion that the heart at its deepest levels does not betray the highest values gleaned by the mind. The New Testament has one unity, and one essential meaning, viz. the soul of Jesus, and the Fourth Gospel gathers it all up as none other had been able. Its transcendence must not be a stumbling block to us, but the benediction of the greatest vision that can be given of the Master. All the Gospels, in their varying metres, chant as in unison 'We have seen His glory --- That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you', but it is the major vision of John that crowns them all. It is the supreme view of Jesus, and the supernal gift of the Holy Spirit to the pilgrim Church.

iv) As such, the Fourth Gospel affords a fitting and satisfactory presentation of Jesus Christ as Lord, satisfactory alike to the chequered history of the Church, and to the experience which has constituted her life and witness down the centuries. No effect can ever be greater than its cause, but the cause must be seen as effect -plus. If Jesus had not been what His church has strenuously maintained He is, we should not at this late date be arguing either His person or His work, still less His cross. The years would have swallowed up every phase in oblivion.

The Fourth Gospel, then, must be held as Reality at its

deepest and truest, the effect of the post-Synoptist Church to declare its larger vision of the Christ, hence the apparent dissonance in presentation when the Synoptic Gospels are put up as the criterion of what Jesus said and did. The fact is, that we need the Fourth Gospel to interpret the deep things in the Synoptists.

The Fourth Gospel is also Modernity at its most daring point and at its best, the effort to meet the fresh needs of the Church in a developing environment. It broke the back of the Gnostic attempt to foist an errant Christology upon the young Church, and it is the spear-head of every modern advance against the enemy in the present hour. So truly and essentially modern is it in its freshness of presentation, that it can meet the attacks of every heretical onslaught.

The characteristic of Intensity also must not be missed. There is here an intensity of vision and feeling as the surge of the soul of the Church to crown Christ 'Lord of all'. It is an intensity born of the Spirit who is sheer flame, hence all these three characteristics. The Spirit can never be other than life's supreme Contemporary, ever revealing to the Church those things by which she lives and conquers. It is He who binds all the New Testament within the bond of the transcendent Christ.

It may not be in error therefore to say that John's Gospel is the implicit Synoptist presentation read on deeper levels. If we live only on the Synoptist level, John at first is inexplicable; but reverse the procedure, John read first, and the

Synoptists are flooded with finer light from end to end. Indeed, it may well be asked whether the first three could or would have been written, had there not been the possibility of the Fourth issuing at the later hour determined upon by the Spirit. In the Fourth Gospel one is going deeper, getting 'further ben', discovering a new dimension in the which all the rest stand out in clearer light. 'We have a doctrine of faith', says Dean Inge, 'which is deeper than that of the Synoptists. The very expression, πιστεύετε ἐν εἰς, "to believe on", common in St. John, and rare elsewhere, shows that the word is taking on a new meaning.' (74) This is backed up by Howard, when he says, 'Even in the Synoptists the simple sublimity of the Galilean teaching depends for its significance upon the Person of Him who taught. For this reason, faith has a prominent place in the Fourth Gospel -----. It marks a moral attitude to Christ. It stands for an exercise of the higher judgment.' (75) To which a word of Canon Raven is appropriate: 'In the case of Jesus we find ourselves faced with One who transcends all our criteria and manifestly belongs to a level of being which few can even apprehend and none may hope to describe.' (76)

The Fourth Gospel, therefore, is essential as the solution of the otherwise insoluble 'Riddle of the New Testament', and save in such a presentation there seems to be none other capable of harmonising all its disparate yet inly related phenomena. It naturally follows that we share Tertullian's great phrase and still greater faith: 'Credibile est quia ineptum est; certum est quia impossibile est; credo quia absurdum.' Again, 'Dicimus et

palam dicimus, et vobis torquentibus lacerati et cruenti
vociferamur: Deum colimus per Christum.' (77)

v) Finally, the Fourth Gospel attests that Jesus becomes His own vindication to the committed heart. There is no other final criterion of judgment, either in the Fourth Gospel or in the faith of the Church. Jesus must be seen, and can only truly be seen, within the sphere of personal surrender. He is never found academically; at best only His form is thereby glimpsed, His spirit is never apprehended. Only when Jesus is seen as the last, final reality of God, the holy Divine Flame expressing itself in Light and Life and Love and Sacrifice, can we find the reason how the community of patrician and plebeian believers survived the ghastly tragedy of the cross, under the taunt of the clever and cynical of their age, and stood out against both sneer and fiery persecution. In the hour of faith, the Church goes back to those certitudes which in her heart she has never really doubted.

This in no wise suggests that the work of historian and critic is invalid. On the contrary, the Church is ever in need of the finest service such servants of truth can render, but still it is on the native faith of the heart that Jesus builds His Church, towards which critic and scholar can both point the way.

Thus the Fourth Gospel is, as Hoskyns puts it, 'the supreme background of all the New Testament sets out to declare.' Though the problem of its authorship as a historical datum may never satisfactorily be solved so as to leave no unresolved

residuum for further and more accurate research, still there is no doubt that the whole Gospel is alive and alight with the dawn that broke over the world when Jesus came, which dawn has not known its setting, and lingers still throughout our world. 'I am the light of the world', He cried: 'he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.' In the deepest sense, therefore, that of faith, for such as follow there is no major riddle either of the Fourth Gospel or of life, since Jesus and the greatest interpretation concerning Him cannot be seen as problem but as sovereign solution. Intellectually, the problems of authorship, and date, and collateral questions of scholarship will naturally intrigue the mind and lure it on to further quest, but the soul of the Christian is at rest, because 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God has shined in the face of Jesus Christ'. In Him, therefore, and in Him alone the sovereign riddle of the whole universe has found its supreme solution.

'Thou hast made us for Thyself,

And our hearts are restless

Till they find rest in Thee.'

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